# 1924-1981.

HOME-GROWN SUGAR.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

It’s History as seen through the Newspapers.

Read all about it.

Expressions of Gratitude.

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the permissions given to me to include the following information in this E-book.

Turbutsey, (or Turbutsea), the description of the site area that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory was built upon, including the text from Turbutsea, Origin of Ely's Roswell Pits. "When the Monks were bled". by Major Gordon Fowler, courtesy of Ely Wildspace Home page .

Potter space, Ely. Ely Business Park (Cambridgeshire) - Potter Space for providing the high-resolution images of the site today.

The design plans for the Ely Beet Sugar Factory buildings and site, courtesy of Cambridgeshire Archives: https://calm.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/. The photographs used in this document begin with the reference number KDT11, or similar, (example KDT11/SE/1/415).

The Newspaper reports that I have used in putting together this E-book, and there are many. I would like to thank everyone concerned in the publishing industry of the time for making these very interesting, and from a historical point of view, a valuable record of The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, something that I feel should be preserved, and it is fascinating to see how historical events were reported as they happened.

I hope you find the following pages as informative and as enjoyable as I have, seeing events unfold over the years.

I worked at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory from October 1974 until closure in May 1981, and although it was a relatively short employment, it has left me with very fond memories of my time there.

The size of the factory and site, the enormous machinery and processes was fascinating to witness, and most importantly of course, the people employed there. They made the factory what it was, an important and valuable part of Ely's history.

John Seymour, Ely, Cambridgeshire, 2025.

All the following text from the newspapers that were used in this project were typed out by myself, and although there may be typographical errors, hopefully they are few.

The first news article is dated February the 2nd, 1924, and the last is dated September the 14th, 1981. There are over 430 individual news items. Some are lengthy reports, along with journalist reports explaining the process of the manufacture of sugar, and also the official opening of the factory on the 15th of October 1925, along with the dignitaries that attended the opening ceremony.

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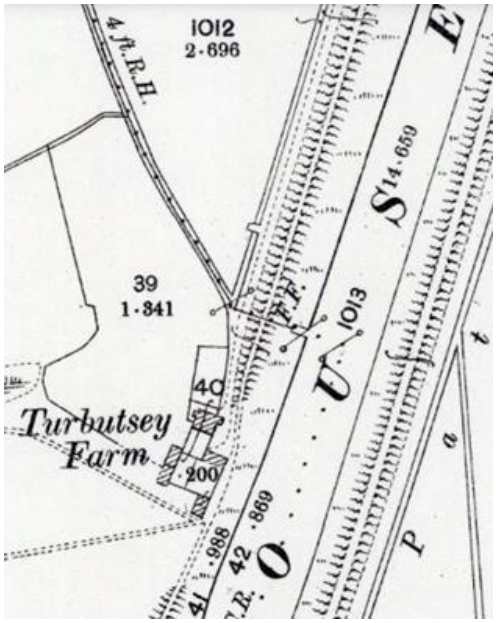
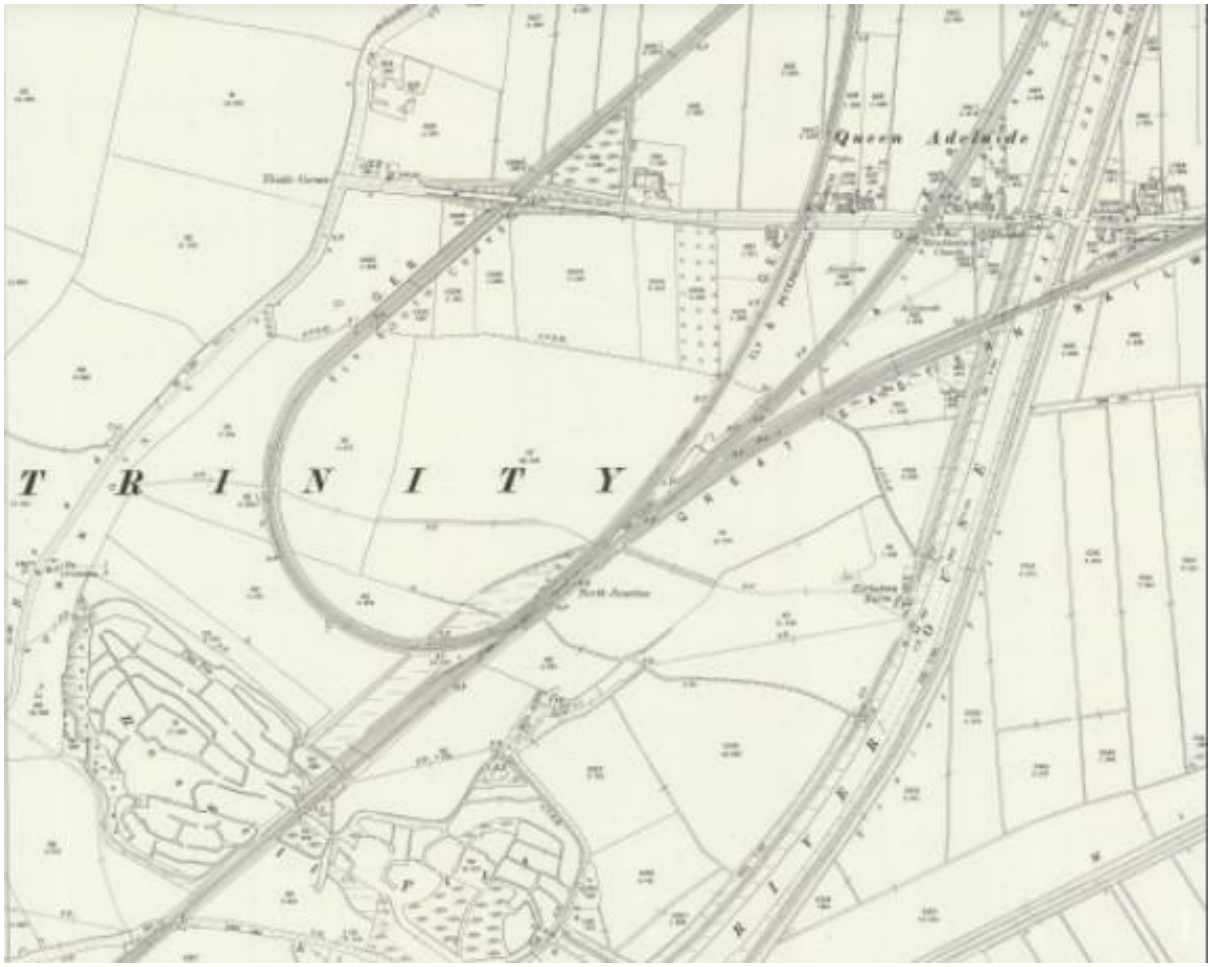



This area was part of the land known as Turbutsey, a port/hythe and, via Springhead Lane, one of the most important routes into Ely prior to the diversion of the river in about 1200 A.D.

Turbutsey was one of the oldest possessions of the Ely Monastery, belonged to the Sacrist of the Monastery. It extended from the old Sugar Beet Factory site towards the Sailing Club. The farm at Turbutsey produced much of the food required for the Sacrist's Department. There was also a chapel and kilns for the manufacture of bricks and tiles. Peat was dug there for use as fuel.



Turbutsea. Origin of Ely's Roswell Pits.
"When the Monks were bled". By Major Gordon Fowler.

The area of land called Tiabrithesea in the 12th century, Tidbreye in the 13th, Tydbury in the 14th, and in more recent times, Turbutsea, covered the whole of the peninsula of hard Kimmeridge clay, (locally called gault) which juts out into the fens below the common on the road from Ely to Adelaide.

From the middle of the 17th century, part of it has been removed bit by bit by the excavations for banking clay and left the Roswell pits. Colonel Archer says that the Cuckoo Bridge, which spans the entrance to the pits, was built in 1660. About 80 yards further to the eastward, and on the right-hand side of the track, can still be seen the last of the ruins of the old Pike and Eel Inn which, according to the same authority, was burnt down in 1884. The two old cottages further along became uninhabitable last winter and no doubt before long will show very few signs of themselves on the surface.

The site of the Turbutsea farmhouse is now covered by the offices of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. The none too fertile fields of the farm and their ditches are no more. On them now stand the attractive little houses and beautiful gardens of the factory staff, or the ugly settling ponds and, towering over all is the great factory itself, second only in size, and importance to the neighbourhood, of the Cathedral.

Turbutsea was quite a notable place locally in the Middle Ages. No little part of its importance was due to the fact that a small stream leaving the main river bed near Quaveney, wandered through the fen to a part of the highland near the present Ouse Drainage Board depot, and afforded the nearest water transport communicate for Ely. Thence came Saint Withburga's body by boat before being carted onto the Monastery in the year 974, after a little body snatching business had gone on between the Monks of Ely and Dereham.

The Monastery had a grange and chapel at Turbutsea. A causeway came to it across the fen from Quaveney to approximately the site of the old Pike and Eel Inn. The Sacrist Rolls of the time of Alan de Walsingham, 1341, give an account of the wages paid to sundry craftsman for the repair of this causeway, some of the oak piles of which the writer has seen pulled up out of the ground during the last few years.

The Turbutsea farmhouse belonged to the Sacrist and, in the time of Clement of Thetford, was used as a place of retreat in 1291. It is recorded that on one Saint Withburga's Day, Clement entertained a party of his brethren and the townsman of Ely there at the cost of £1, 1 shilling. That would be equal to about £21 of our money today, so he must have put up quite a good show. He was there for a whole week during one of the times when the monks were bled, and paid for a sheep, a calf and numbers of chickens etc, which it would seem, were consumed by the company.

The queer custom of bleeding the Monks seems to have been prompted by the desire to keep both their bodies and their minds healthy, but the consumption of rich foods which followed it strikes one as likely to have soon defeated the object. The Sacrists' income was then £265 a year, but we must remember that was equal to about £3,500 today, so he should have been able to afford to be generous. Perhaps the most startling thing that the Sacrists.Rolls show us, is that in the 14th Century, sugar cost what would be about 20 shillings a pound today.

# Introduction.

Today we take sugar for granted, but this wasn't always the case. Rewind the clock back to the early 1900's, and our sugar was imported from overseas and then refined in this country. Sugar in these early years was a luxury. There was one factory however, built in the 1860's in Lavenham, Suffolk, which by today's standards was quite a small affair. Because it was not helped by the government, (subsidised), it lost money, and was short-lived, and therefore forced to close.

The next factory to open was at Cantley in Norfolk in 1912, but this faced disruption due to flooding, and also from the outbreak of World War One. In the 1920's, there were several companies that wanted to build Beet Sugar factories in Great Britain and sought help from the government of the day.

In 1924, the Beet Sugar Subsidy bill readings in the House of Commons, started by the then Labour government, and carried forward by the new Conservative government was passed into law on the first of October,1924, the British Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925. This enabled the infant beet sugar companies with their new factories to be built and, hopefully make a profit on their investments and flourish.

It was an Act to provide for the payment of a subsidy in respect of sugar and molasses manufactured in Great Britain during a period of ten years beginning on the first day of October, nineteen hundred and twenty-four, from beet grown in Great Britain, and to charge a duty of excise on sugar and molasses manufactured in Great Britain and Northern Ireland from beet grown in those countries.

By producing Home-grown sugar there were many benefits alongside food security.

(a), It encourages farmers to grow sugar beet, leading to expanded cultivation across the country, and the supply of raw material for sugar production.

(b), It increased sugar production with the increase in beet available, therefore sugar factories could produce more sugar and molasses. This helped to meet local demand and reduced reliance on imported sugar.

(c), An expansion of beet farming and sugar factories created employment opportunities in rural areas. It supported jobs on the farmland, in the sugar factories, and in transportation.

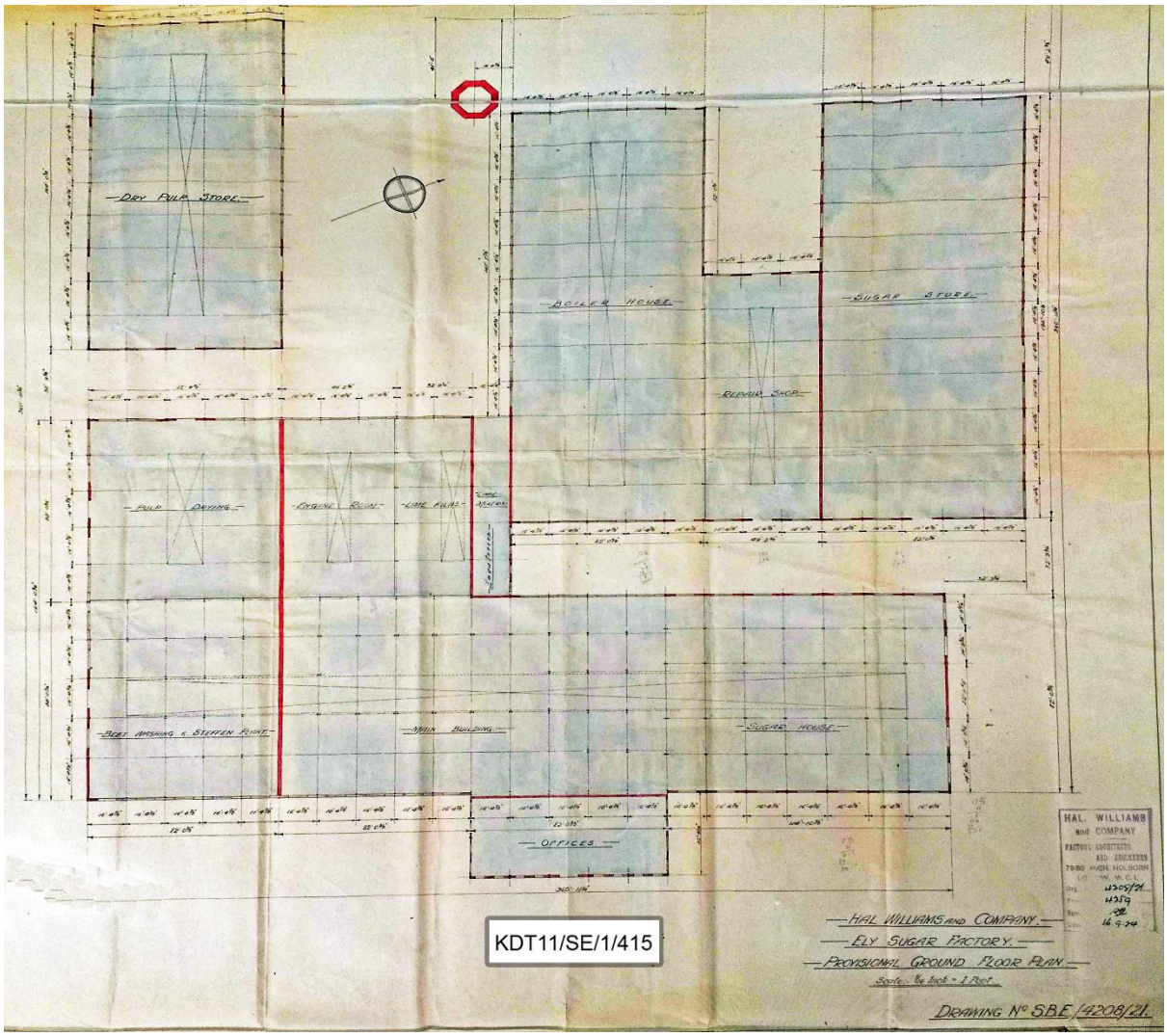
(d), By producing sugar in this country, the subsidy would help to keep sugar prices steady.

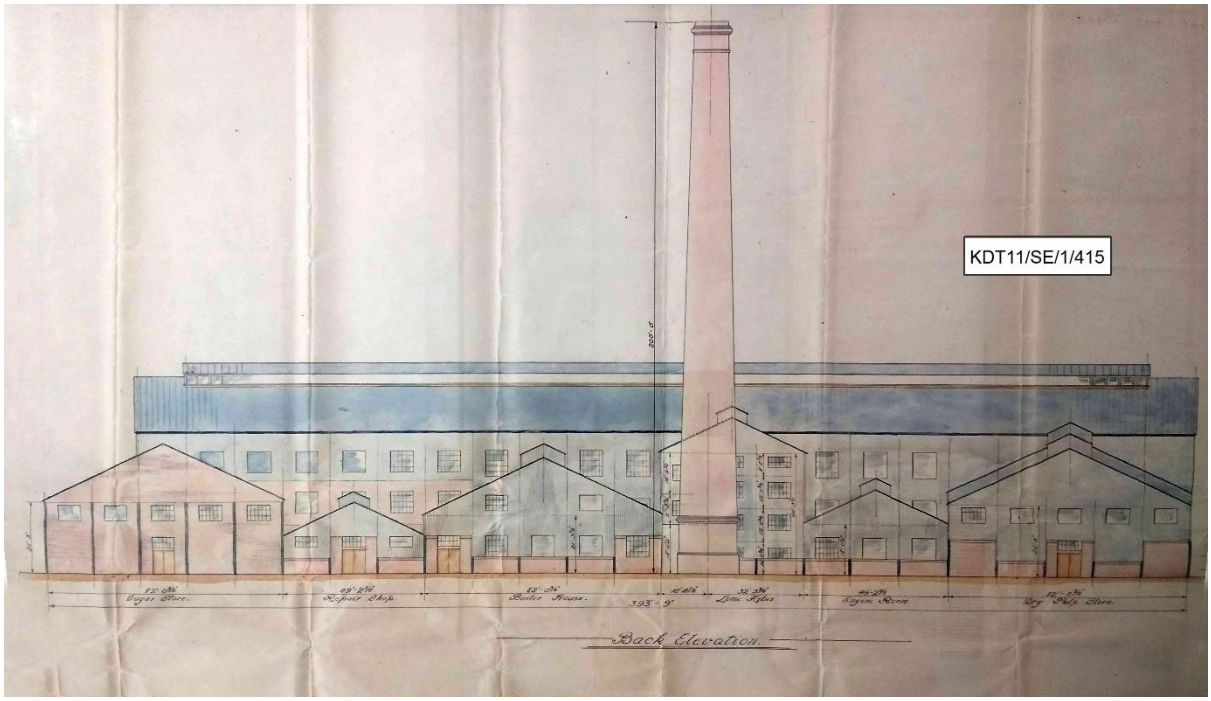
(e), By helping the rural community, the Act would give help to the prosperity and increased living standards of rural low population densities, by promoting beet farming and the industries that supports them.

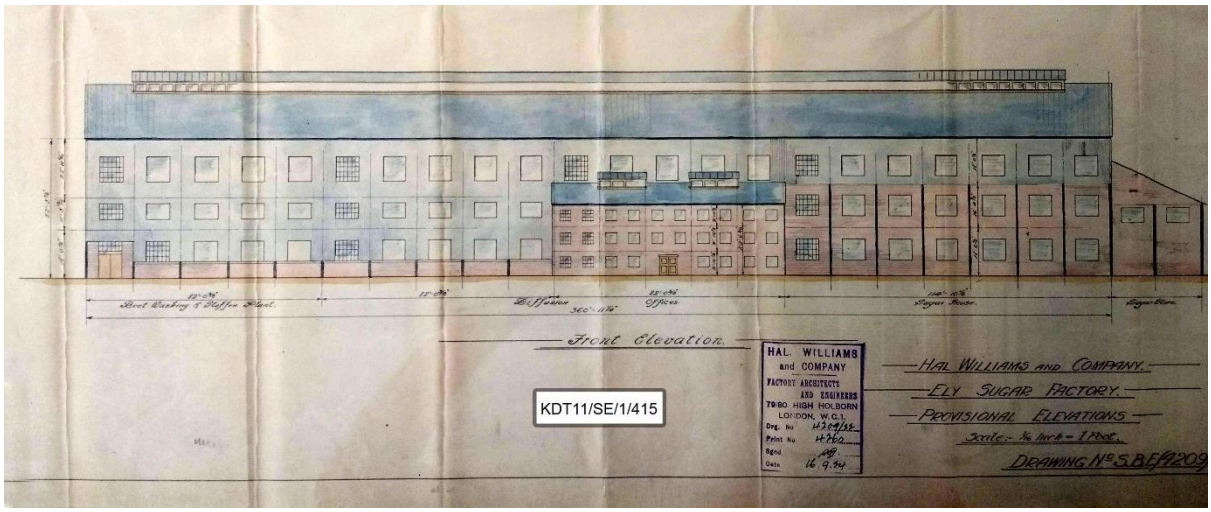
Our story focuses on one of these factories, Ely in Cambridgeshire. The fourth of the 18 factories that were eventually built. The first sod was cut on the 7th of October 1924, and the construction of the factory began. The working factory was officially opened on the 15th of October 1925, a year and a week after the cutting of that first sod.

In the following pages, we will discover the history of our Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

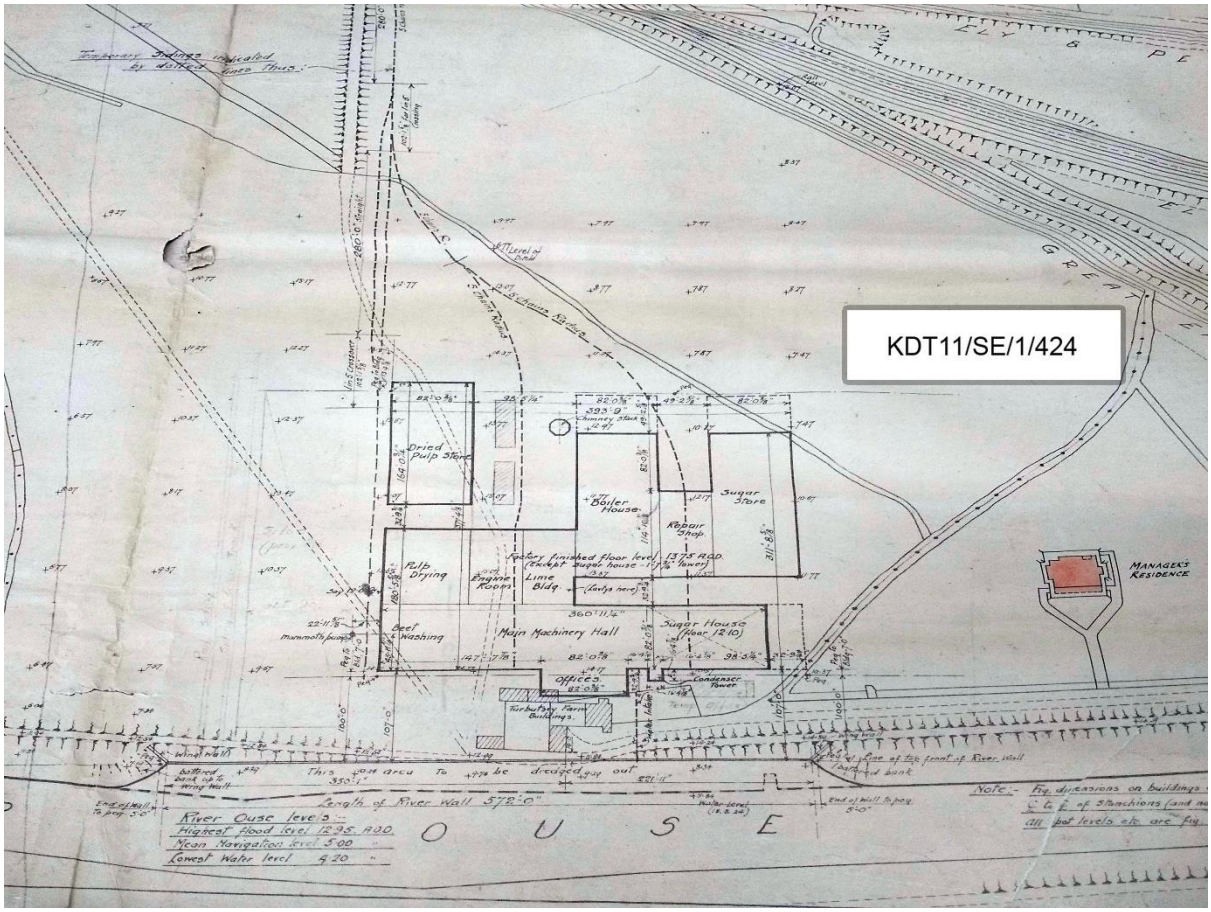
Below is a plan and elevation views of the factory dated September the 16th, 1924.



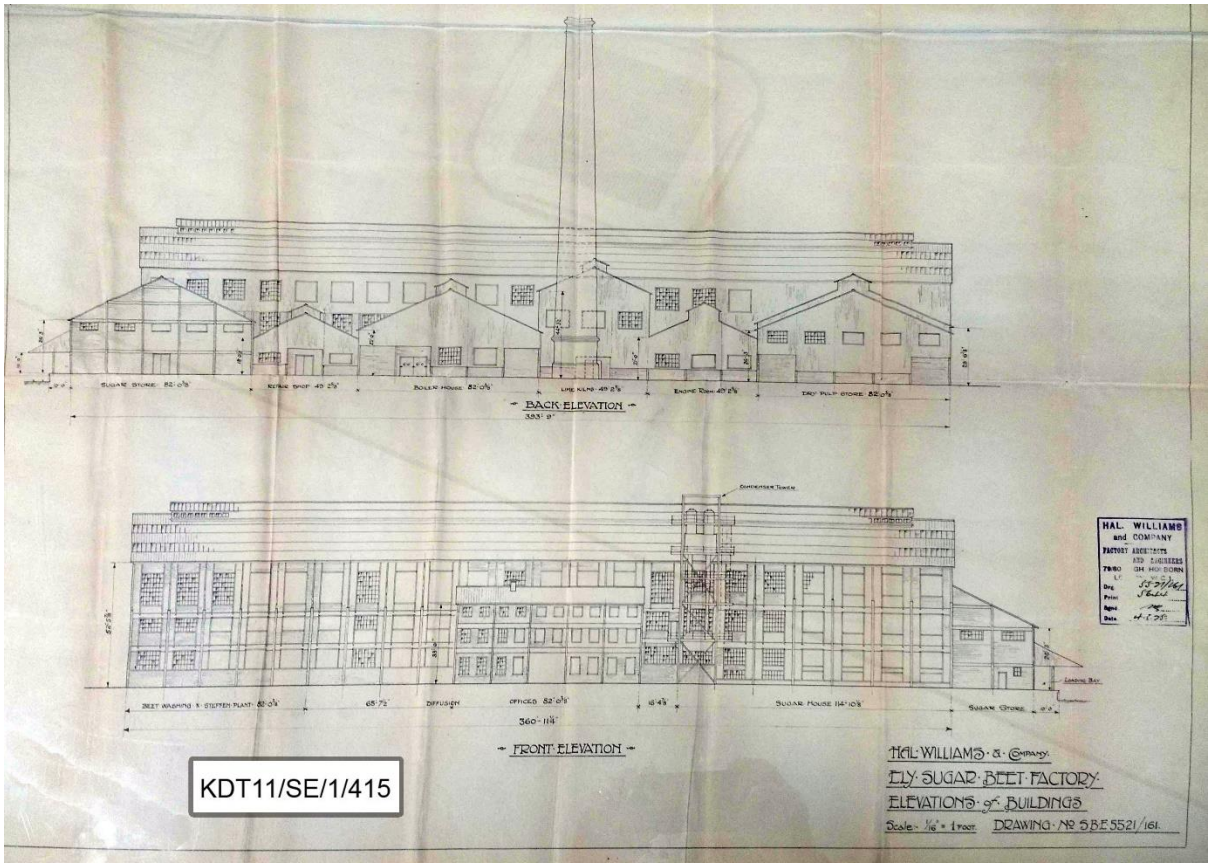






Below is a plan view of the factory dated November the 14th, 1924, and shows the position of the Turbutsey farm buildings adjacent to the river.



The following elevation views are dated March the 4th, 1925.




Beet Sugar.
300,000 acres would provide a quarter of our needs.
Two crops in six years.

The Buckingham Advertiser and North Bucks Free Press, Saturday, February the 2nd, 1924.

The interesting fact that 300,000 acres of sugar beet would provide a crop equal to one-quarter of our sugar imports, is advanced by Mr A Lancaster Smith, author of “Farmer’s Pie”, who declares that this acreage would give employment to an additional 30,000 men on the land, and 15,000 in factories during the manufacturing campaign, while there would be work for 2,500 in the off-season.

The Ministry of Agriculture’s statistics for 1923 showed a marked advance in sugar beet production, the total of 16,900 acres being just double that of the previous year. The most notable increase was in the Holland Division of Lincolnshire, where 880 acres were grown as against 110 acres in 1922.

Norfolk accounted for 4,740 acres; Lincolnshire, (Kesteven), for 3,220 acres, and the Isle of Ely, 2,360 acres. Sugar beet is thus becoming a crop of considerable importance, the acreage being about equal during last year to that under Brussel sprouts.

There is, however, of course, the field for much wider developments, as soon as it is possible to build and equip the necessary factories for dealing with the roots. There is no doubt that the ultimate prosperity of agriculture depends to a large extent upon the manner in which the development of sugar beet cultivation, and other allied questions are tackled.

The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, stated in their report with reference to sugar beet: "We recommend that the production of sugar beet should continue to enjoy the benefit of exemption from the Excise for a period sufficiently long to enable the experiment to be thoroughly tested." The agriculturist is beginning to realise that wheat growing and beet growing must go hand in hand, and that from every point of view, the cultivation of sugar beet, and the production of home-grown sugar, is likely to help towards the goal of prosperity to agriculture.

## Could grow all required.

The average farmer knows very well that the sugar beet and the mangle are closely related, and there is no difficulty in growing all the sugar that this country requires, if the necessary factories were available to deal with the roots. In the present state of the nation's finances, it is unlikely that any extensive scheme of subsidy is likely to fructify, but the facts ought to be borne in mind by all interested in agriculture.

Mr. R N Dowling, a leading expert on the cultivation of the crop, has shown that so far as the rotation is concerned, in Germany the general system is a four course one, i.e., sugar beet, barley, seeds, wheat, but a six-course rotation is often preferred– (1) Sugar beet; (2) spring wheat; (3) sugar beet; (4) barley; (5) seeds (clover, etc); (6) wheat.

In this way, sugar beet is grown twice in six years, and clover only comes once, thus helping to prevent Clover sickness." It is probable that sugar beet will replace a portion of our root crops, but will be grown alongside of mangolds, swedes and turnips, which crops will be fed in conjunction with the residual sugar beet pulp to all classes of stock."

As a suitable manurial prescription for the treatment of sugar beet, the following is of general usefulness: --

10-12 tons farmyard manure per acre (ploughed in, in autumn)—

- 5 to 6 hundredweights French Kanit, 14% or 2 to 3 hundredweights Sylvinite 20%.
- 6 to 7 hundredweights superphosphate. Basic slag or basic phosphate.
- To be worked into the land in February. 2 hundredweights sulphate of ammonia or nitrate of soda, (applied in two dressings)

## Cultivation.

Almost any soil is suitable for sugar beet, so long as moisture, deep tillage and necessary plant foods are applied. The seed is drilled in April at the rate of 15lb per acre, and it should not be buried deeper than 3/4 of an inch, the distance between the rows being 16 to 18 inches.

When the plants are sufficiently strong, they are bunched, and then singled. It is very important to keep the plant well hoed, and hoeing should be commenced immediately after the first young leaves appear and the rows become visible.

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England's Sugar Beet.
Ely farmers supporting scheme for local factory.

The Daily Chronicle, Wednesday, September the 3rd, 1924.

The expansion of the sugar beet growing industry in England is indicated by the fact that still another factory is to be built. The site has been selected near Ely. Beet contracts have been offered to farmers in the district, and are already being largely taken up.

Building will be begun as soon as the required acreage has been promised.

A leading Cambridgeshire agriculturist, Sir Frederick Hiam, Director of Vegetable Supplies during the war, and Mr J P van Rossum, the well-known expert in beet sugar, are the principal parties to the enterprise, for which a new company will be formed.

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The Sugar Beet Industry.
Proposed new factories.

The Grantham Journal, Saturday, September the 6th, 1924.

It is stated Spalding may be chosen as the site of one of the six new sugar beet factories to be erected in England, now that the industry has been subsidised by the Government. The town has a good railway junction, river traffic, and numerous fresh water drains, -- the last named being important, since the factory would eventually require 5,000,000 gallons of water a day.

At present, 1,500 acres around Spalding are under sugar beet. but when the factory is in working order, it would require from eight to 10,000 acres. This would help the potato trade by minimising the risk of overproduction.

That the Lincolnshire Fen soil can grow the best beet, is shown by the fact, that since it was offered for competition for the best beet in all England four years ago, the Mason Cup has never left South Lincolnshire. The total cost of the factory is understood to be about £300,000.

The two existing beet sugar factories in this country are at Cantley, (Norfolk), and Kelham, (Nottinghamshire). A third factory, which it is understood will be ready for this season's crop, is being built at Colwick, (Nottingham).

The British Sugar Beet Society, states that definite information has been received as to one of the six new factory schemes referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons on July the 30th, and by the Minister of Agriculture in his recent speech at Walsingham, Norfolk. A suitable site has been selected near Ely, Cambs.

Beet contracts have been offered to farmers in the district and are already being largely taken up. Arrangements are well in hand to commence building operations as soon as the required acreage has been promised.

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Ely Sugar Factory to be Built.
Sufficient acreage obtained to warrant procedure.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 12th, 1924.

The erection of a beet sugar factory at Ely is now assured.

A representative of the company informs this journal that contracts have been entered into with farmers, for the growing of a sufficient acreage of beet to warrant the Company in proceeding with the scheme, and that the factory will be built.

Thus, by their ready co-operation with the factory promoters, the farmers of the district have ensured the materialisation of an industrial enterprise which will undoubtedly be a valuable acquisition to agriculture in the district, to the city of Ely, and to the county as a whole.

The scheme is that with which Sir Fred Hiam, Mr. J P van Rossem, Doctor A Wijnberg and Doctor van Loon are associated. It is only three weeks since it was officially announced that these gentlemen were negotiating for the acquisition of a site in the neighbourhood of Ely for the purpose of erecting thereon, a beet sugar factory, and inviting the co-operation of farmers in the growing of beet.

“It is only intended,” the announcement stated, “to proceed with the erection of the factory when offers for at least 5,000 acres have been received, on or before, the 15th of September next.” Procedure with the scheme, therefore, depended upon whether or not the farmers undertook to co-operate to an adequate extent with the factory promoters in contracting to grow the essential commodity, the sugar beet.

We are glad to be able to state that they have done so, for the representative of the Company informed us on Wednesday that contracts had already been entered into by farmers for the growing of beet on over 5,000 acres of land, that other contracts were being signed, and that consequently the erection of the factory is assured. He further stated that contracts will be accepted up to 10,000 acres. Farmers who may wish to grow beet for the factory should therefore make early application to Mr. G N Venn, 87, Mawson Road, Cambridge.

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Justification for the Building of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 19th, 1924.

The following advertisement appeared in this edition of the newspaper.

Advertisement reads:

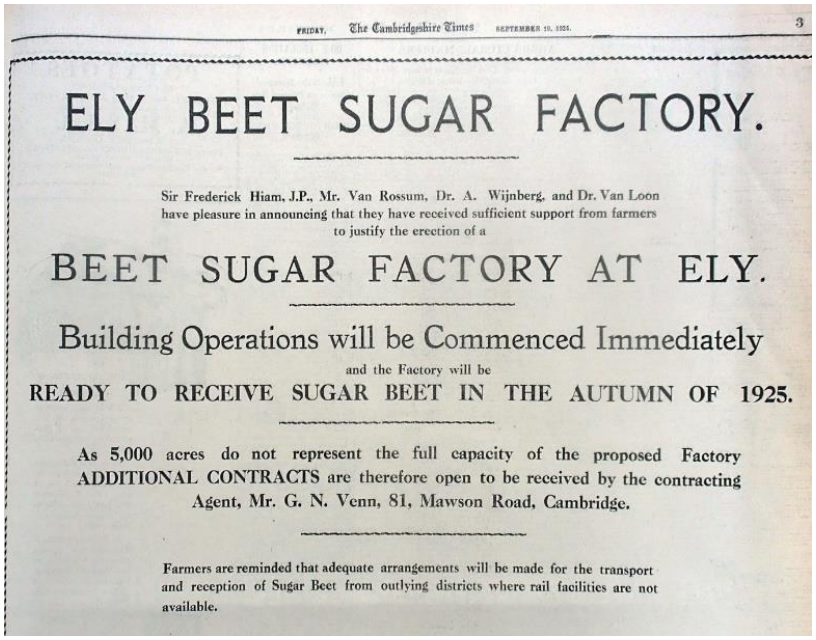
Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

Sir Frederick Hiam, Justice of the Peace, Mr. van Rossum, Doctor A Wijnberg and Doctor van Loon, have pleasure in announcing that they have received sufficient support for farmers to justify the erection of a Beet Sugar Factory at Ely.

Building operations will be commenced immediately, and the factory will be ready to receive Sugar Beet in the autumn of 1925.

As 5,000 acres do not represent the full capacity of the proposed factory, additional contracts are therefore open to be received from the contracting agent, Mr. G N Venn, 81, Mawson Road, Cambridge.

Farmers are reminded that adequate arrangements will be made for the transport and reception of Sugar Beet from outlying districts where rail facilities are not available.



FRIDAY. The Cambridgeshire Times SEPTEMBER 19, 1924. 3

ELY BEET SUGAR FACTORY.

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The Sugar Beet Industry.
Preparing for the 1925 crop.

The Birmingham Post, Wednesday, November the 19th, 1924.

Speaking at Wolverhampton yesterday on the sugar beet industry, Mr Alfred Wood, secretary of the British Sugar Beet Society, said four of the six promised factories, –at Ely, Kidderminster, Spalding and Ipswich, –were expected to be ready for the 1925 crop of beet.

The farmers, through the National Farmers Union, were co-operating with the manufacturers in every possible way, and the Society was now devoting attention to the education and training of British personnel, to take higher technical posts in sugar factories.

With regard to the conference on agriculture, which the Government was convening to arrive at a national policy, the society was convinced that the sugar beet industry would be found to offer a fundamental contribution to the policy of an increased arable cultivation, and a revived rural prosperity.

All the society's experience and information with regard to this new industry would be at the disposal of the Government.

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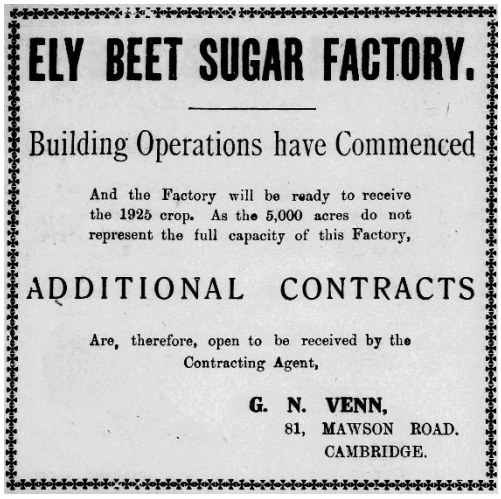
Ely Beet Sugar Factory.
The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Wednesday, November the 19th, 1924.

Advertisement below.



**ELY BEET SUGAR FACTORY.**

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**Ely Beet Sugar Factory**. Building Operations have Commenced.

And the Factory will be ready to receive the 1925 crop. As the 5,000 acres do not represent the full capacity of this Factory, **Additional Contracts** are, therefore, open to be received by the Contracting Agent, **G N Venn,** 81 Mawson Road, Cambridge.

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British Sugar Beet.

The Westminster Gazette, Wednesday, December the 10th, 1924.

Mr Alfred Wood, addressing the Rotary Club at Wolverhampton yesterday, on behalf of the British Sugar Beet Society, said four of the six promised sugar factories, –at Ely, Kidderminster, Spalding and Ipswich, –were expected to be ready for the 1925 crop of beet.

The society was now devoting attention to the education and training of British personnel to take the higher technical posts in the factories; --universities and factories would be invited to co-operate.

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Another Beet Sugar Factory.

The Sussex Agricultural Express, Friday, December the 19th, 1924.

One of the six new beet sugar factory schemes promised to the late Government on the basis of the subsidy proposals, is to be built at Ipswich. It will serve sugar beet growers in South Suffolk and Essex, and will manufacture white sugar and dried beet pulp, having a capacity of 1,200 tons of beet per day. It will be ready by October the 1st, 1925, in time for the next season's crop. The scheme has been undertaken by the Anglo Dutch Group, who are operating the factories at Cantley and Kelham, and building the new factory at Ely. Work in connection with the erection of a beet sugar factory at Bury Saint Edmunds, will be begun next month. The cost will be over £350,000. Half the capital is being provided by British interests, the other half by a group of Hungarian experts.

Home sugar beet seed.

In reply to a question as to the provision of home-grown sugar beet seed, the Minister of Agriculture intimated that the practicability of growing the seed in this country is under consideration between the National Farmers Union and certain of the seed firms and research stations, and that pending this consideration, he could not indicate the steps his department could take to assist in the matter. The reference is to the action taken recently by the National Farmers Union Sugar Beet Committee, to inquire into the possibilities of research and experimental work being undertaken for the object in view.

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An Agricultural Review for 1924.
By Sir Richard Winfrey.

The Bury Free Press, Saturday, January the 3rd, 1925.

I am again asked to contribute an annual review of British Agriculture, and I can certainly begin by saying, as I did a year ago, that I take a much more hopeful view of the agricultural situation than many writers on the subject.

Indeed, what I venture to say in my review twelve months ago has been more than justified by events. The position to-day all round is better, considerably better, than at any period since the war. Profits, it is true, are not so large as in 1919 and 1920, but that is all to the good.

Those abnormal prices turned our heads and made us lose our balance to such an extent that agricultural land was sold and bought at absurdly high prices, with the inevitable disastrous result which always has followed undue inflation of land values.

For history repeats itself, and some of us are old enough to remember what happened in the early seventies; How after the Franco German War, the price of agricultural produce soared up and up, with the result that agricultural land advanced in price to quite as high a figure as it did in 1920.

That meant in the seventies, as it always means, high rents and consequent high outgoings all round. Then, as now, followed the inevitable lean years, but for a much longer period. Every generation has to learn its lesson–at least every generation who lives through a Great War, and has to face the disturbing influences of its aftermath.

We are truly fortunate in this generation, that the aftermath has been of shorter duration than that experienced by our forefathers. This year, (1924), everything has been more normal in the agricultural world, and it looks as if we are settling down to steadier prices, both for buying and selling. Even the most cautious members of the farming community are ready to admit they have made reasonable profits as a result of their present years trading.

Good prices.

Sound English wheat to-day, (I write this in November), is worth 56 shillings per quarter. Last year it made from 37 shillings to 44 shillings., and the yields are, generally speaking, above the average. The best samples of malting barley in many cases have made from 80 shillings, to 100 shillings per quarter. That means money at 6 and 7 quarters to the acre. All the fair

quality barley has made up to 60 shillings., whilst last year the top price for the very best was only 60 shillings. Oats are worth 30 shillings., as compared with 24 shillings, to 28 shillings last year. Peas are making from 80 shillings, to 100 shillings per quarter, which is a big price.

Compare these present-day prices with twenty-five years ago, (1899), and we can then more readily realise the situation. Wheat was then 25 shillings to 27 shillings.; barley 20 shillings to 30 shillings.; oats 18 shillings to 20 shillings.; beans 30 shillings to 33 shillings.; and peas 25 shillings to 34 shillings, per quarter.

The reduction in the area of land under wheat is about 200,000 acres, (one-quarter less), but, on the other hand, more barley and oats have been grown, and all the cereal crops this year show a better yield, on the whole than in 1923, although they have not been secured in quite such a good condition, --the unsettled weather made a protracted harvest.

But it is not only cereals; potatoes are making anything from £8 to £10 per ton. The yield per acre varies considerably, whilst in some districts there is a large amount of blight, yet there are many thousands of acres where the yield is from 6 to 10 tons per acre, and here again it will be seen that means money. I have indeed heard of exceptional crops of 12 to 14 tons per acre.

Sugar beet industry.

Then, in the East of England, the acreage of sugar beet has been increased to a considerable extent, and there are good signs of the growth of sugar beet increasing by leaps and bounds in the near future.

The two sugar beet factories already in existence at Cantley in Norfolk, and Kelham in Nottingham, are working full time, with a full load. The new factory at Colwick near Nottingham, has just been completed.

It is now, I believe, finally settled that £300,000 shall be forthwith spent in erecting a fourth factory at Spalding, Lincolnshire, whilst Cambridgeshire is to have a factory at Ely, and Suffolk is moving to secure one for that county; a site has also been secured for a factory at Kidderminster.

The Anglo-Scottish Beet Corporation have raised a capital of £1,000,000 without any Government assistance, and it is part of this capital which is being spent to erect the Spalding factory. It is estimated that each of these factories will be able to deal with 4,000 acres of sugar beet annually.

The price paid for the crop last season at Kelham was 55 shillings and 3 pence per ton, and will be about the same for the present season, –this includes the Government bounty of 22 shillings and 10 pence per hundredweight of sugar, which is equivalent to one ton of beet.

This Government bounty, which Mr Snowden, the late Chancellor slightly increased has, of course, made all the difference to the farmer, in assuring a remunerative price for his crops. Indeed, when a fair average crop yields 12 tons per acre, it will be seen what 55 shillings and 3 pence per ton works out at. There is a large amount of labour employed in sugar beet growing, and probably a fair estimate of the cost of the crop would be from £16 to £18 per acre.

I have written at length on this because it is a New Industry, made possible by the bounty from the State, and in this regard, we are following in the footsteps of Germany and Czechoslovakia, where the sugar beet industry has become firmly established by a system of bounties, and it must be remembered, it is done without raising the price of sugar to the

consumer. Indeed, as the output of these factories becomes a factor to reckon with, (at present the output is too small to make a difference), then it will assuredly have a tendency to reduce the price to the consumer.

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The Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Northern Whig and Belfast Post, Friday, January the 9th, 1925.

One of the six new beet sugar factories promised on the basis of the late Government subsidy proposals, is now in course of erection at Ely, Cambridgeshire, by the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

As the building of this factory, to be ready in 1925, was started on October the 7th last, it will be the fourth beet sugar factory in this country.

Its capacity will be about 1,200 tons of beet per day, and its cost will be up to £300,000, including buildings, plant, silos, sidings, site, houses, and erection of plant and buildings.

At present over 160 men are employed upon the site, and the number will increase to 300 before the factory is complete next autumn, when 600 men will be employed in the manufacture of sugar.

A supply of 10,000 acres of beets on contract for three years is required, and 5,000 acres have already been secured.

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The Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

To be ready for next year’s crop.

Some interesting details.

By our representative on the spot.

The Spalding Guardian, Saturday January the 10th, 1925.

The building of a beet sugar factory at Adelaide, near Ely, is now progressing apace, and by this time next year, it is confidently hoped that hundreds of tons of sugar will have been produced there.

Many farmers in the Isle of Ely and in other parts have already contracted to grow sugar beet, and the factory is to be equipped in readiness for dealing with next year's crop.

The site of the building, is about two miles out of Ely, in the hamlet of Adelaide, along Prickwillow Road, and is a most favourable one from the point of view of transport.

The river Ouse runs along one side of the buildings, and on the other is the London and North Eastern railway line, from which a siding is to be constructed.

## A Good Start is Assured.

Few factories of this description could start under more promising conditions, as several of the Directors have had great experience of the beet sugar industry, not only in Holland, but with the Cantley, (Norfolk), factory.

The accumulated experience of these gentlemen should prove of great value. The staff, too, will be made-up of experienced men and although the Company is not exactly the same as that which controls the Cantley factory, the friendly relationships between the two will ensure that an experienced staff is available for Adelaide.

This is a matter of considerable importance, as, owing to the comparative youth of the industry in this country, experienced men are difficult to obtain.

The new factory has already secured numerous contracts, many for three-year periods, and with others that are still being taken up, it is expected that the produce of at least 8,000 acres will be received next year.

In the past, many of the growers who have contracted have supplied sugar beet to the Cantley Factory. This year's Cantley figures for beet grown in the Ely area show that the average crop, as ascertained from deliveries up to date, is eleven and a half tons per acre, this figure taking into consideration crop failures, etc.

The average sugar content of the beet is very nearly 17 per cent., a very good standard, and one that has been improving yearly. Not only is seed supplied from the factory to those who contract to grow, but full instructions for cultivation are given, and expert advice is always available for any farmer who cares to ask for it.

## Prospects of Local Labour.

The “Campaign”, during which the sugar is produced, commences in October and lasts for three months or just over. In the busy time, as many as 500 men will be employed, and as very little skilled labour is required, much local labour will be absorbed.

Of course, during what may be called the close season when the crop has been disposed of, there are still a number of men employed at the factory in various occupations, although no actual manufacturing is going on.

Apart from any extensions which may be required, it has been found that each season, a sugar factory has to make several improvements as a result of experience gained, and new ideas.

## Memorandum for Growers.

Sugar beet requires practically the same cultivation as mangolds, and presents no unusual difficulties.

One point that is insisted upon by all beet sugar factories, is that the roots must be properly “topped.” The crown of the beet has very little sugar content, and therefore, unless it is topped properly, –below the lowest leaves, –it has to be done again on arrival, and the wastage is treated as dirt.

Deliveries will be taken at intervals, the usual system being to get the farmer to notify the approximate amount of the crop, and times at which he can forward. These times are confirmed or regulated, and naturally the factory like them adhered to, as if a whole crop is forwarded in one consignment, when three have been asked for, it is very likely to be held up either on rail or at the factory. In this case, the beets are likely to deteriorate. Premiums are

offered for early delivery in the event of the factory desiring consignments prior to the 1st of October, and the amount of such premium will be notified to the growers not later than September the 15th in the year concerned.

The period at which the beets are really at their best is early in November: if left in the ground after that time, they begin to deteriorate. After the factory has dealt with the crop, the dried pulp that remains, may be bought back by the grower to the amount of 5 percent of the total net weight of beets delivered by him during the season.

This pulp is of considerable value as cattle food, and factories rarely have difficulty in disposing of it. No chemical processes are used in the extraction of the juice, and therefore the pulp, which still has a certain amount of sugar left in it, is really a concentrated food, and may be used to great advantage in feeding rations.

The sugar content of every consignment is ascertained, as the growers are paid according to this factor. From each grower's consignment, 10 average roots are taken, cleaned and analysed by the chemists of the factory. From the sugar content obtained from the sample, that of the whole consignment is worked out.

The grower is notified of the certified price of his beet, and it is interesting to note that representatives of the National Farmers Union are, on his behalf, present at the factory during the season, their business being to check weights, deductions for excessive dirt, sugar content, etc., so that the grower has every check upon his consignments.

For this service, a penny per ton is deducted from the amount the grower receives. In the case of any truck being received that contains beet out of the ordinary, the attention of the farmers representative is called to it.

How prices are ascertained.

Last summer, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, (Mr Philip Snowden), announced the Government's proposals upon the price of beet to be supplied to the factories under existing contracts between the growers and manufacturers.

Under these contracts, the grower receives for each ton of beets of fifteen, and one-half percent sugar content, (with an addition or deduction of 2 shillings and 6 pence per ton, for each 1 percent of sugar content, above or below fifteen, and one-half percent), a sum equal to the average receipts of the factory per hundredweight of sugar produced.

If, however, he has contracted for a period of years, this price is increased by one-seventh, the large majority of growers being under contract for three years.

A definite statement was made quite recently, that the proposals referred to above would be given legislative effect, thus:

The price for beet, being based on net Factory receipts, will be automatically increased by 11 shillings and 2 pence per ton, that is to say, the difference between 19/6 and 9/9 with the addition of one-seventh.

It should, however, be pointed out that every Factory which claims the 19/6 subsidy, whatever the nature of its contract with the farmer may be, must pay not less than 44 shillings per ton of beet to the grower, on the basis of 15 ½ percent sugar content.

So that while the grower shares in the benefit of higher world prices, the manufacturer must take all risks in any fall in the average sale price of the sugar he produces below 28/9 per cwt.

Experts on the directorate.

The Directors of the Company, are Sir James Martin, of Messrs. Martin Farlow and Company, Incorporated Accountants; Sir Fred Hiam, a leading Cambridgeshire farmer; Colonel G L Courthope, MC MP, Chairman of the Central Land Owners Association, and three well known beet sugar experts, Mr J P van Rossum, Doctor A Wijnberg, and Doctor A van Loon.

The Right Honourable George H Roberts will act as alternate Director to Mr van Rossum, and Mr Alfred Wood is the Secretary. The solicitors are Messrs. Morris Ward-Jones, Kennett and Co., of London.

The architects and consulting engineers responsible for the construction of the factory are Messrs. Hal Williams and Company, Factory House, High Holborn, London, and Clerk of the Works is Mr W.H. Taylor, Mr. E. A. Hobbs being the resident architect.

The buildings.

The river frontage extends 588 feet 4 inches, and it is anticipated that provision will be made for unloading barges, as by the use of water transport, where possible, it is hoped to effect a considerable saving on railway freightage, a charge which has to be borne by the grower.

Substantial progress is being made with the erection of the steel framework of the buildings.

The buildings will comprise 2 sheds, 450 ft by 45 ft, two more, 200 ft by 52ft and 29 ft, and two others, 280 ft by 54 ft and 29 ft.

The main building will consist of a dried pulp shed, 164 ft by 82 ft, a pulp drying and beet washing shed, 164 ft by 82 ft, engine room, lime buildings, etc, 112 ft by 80 ft, main machinery hall and sugar house, 276 ft by 82 ft, boiler house, 186 ft by 82 ft, repair shop, 58 ft by 48 ft, sugar store, 192 ft by 84 ft, and offices, 28 ft by 32 ft.: the height of the main building to plate will be 52ft 6in, and others 26ft 3ins.

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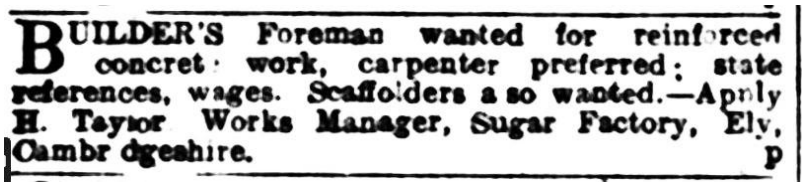
Situations vacant.

The Nottingham Journal, Monday, January the 14th, 1925,

Advertisement reads:


BUILDER'S Foreman wanted for reinforced concrete work, carpenter preferred; state references, wages. Scaffolders also wanted.—Apply H. Taylor Works Manager, Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambridgeshire. p

Builder's Foreman wanted for reinforced concrete work, carpenter preferred: state references, wages. Scaffolders also wanted. –Apply H Taylor, Works Manager, Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambridgeshire.

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Situations vacant.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, January the 16th, 1925.

Advertisement reads:

Wanted, Bricklayers, Carpenters and Scaffolders. – Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs. Apply, office on job.

WANTED, BRICKLAYERS, CARPENTERS and SCAFFOLDERS. — Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs. Apply, office on job.

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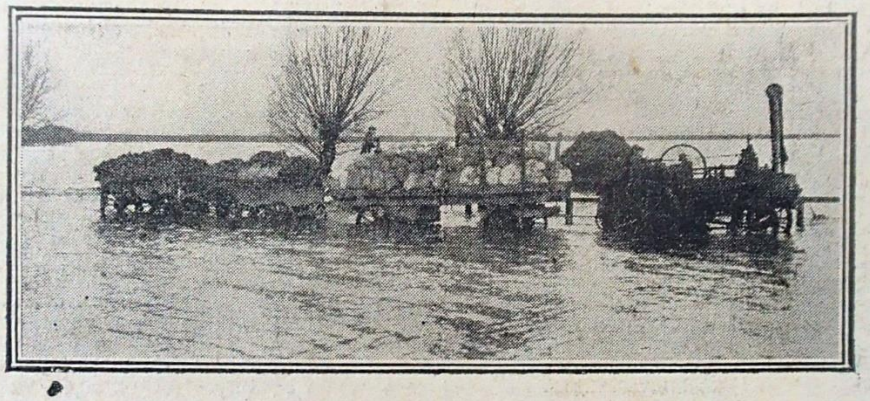
Hauling Sugar Beet through the flood.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, January the 16th, 1925.

Photograph and caption.

HAULING SUGAR BEET THROUGH FLOOD.



Photo] [E. W. Dewey, Sutton.

The photograph shows a traction engine hauling a 12-ton load of sugar beet across the flooded causeway between the Old and New Bedford Rivers at Sutton. The engine pulled its load safely through water about two feet deep for about 200 yards, and the greater part of the distance was traversed after the fire had been extinguished by the water.

Caption reads: The photograph shows a traction engine hauling a 12-ton load of sugar beet across the flooded causeway between the Old and New Bedford Rivers at Sutton. The engine pulled its load safely through water about two feet deep for about 200 yards, and the greater part of the distance was traversed after the fire had been extinguished by the water.

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From Beet to Sugar.
The Wonderful operations of a Modern Factory.
Cambs Farmers' visit to Colwick.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, January the 23rd, 1925.

How scientific genius and mechanical ingenuity, have translated into actual fact, the seemingly romantic idea of the production of sugar from beet was unfolded before the eyes of a party of Cambridgeshire farmers on Friday, when they paid a visit to the new factory of the Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, at Colwick, near Nottingham.

The visit was full of interest to growers of sugar beet, and served to enhance their realisation of the importance of the industry in which they are participating.

The Colwick factory is not the first erected in this country, as growers hereabouts well know. It is, however, the first factory of British design and construction, and is a shining example of industrial courage, an enterprise in the effort to develop the production of sugar in England.

The expedition with which it was erected constitutes, moreover, a unique achievement, for within eight months of the placing of the contract, the factory was in working condition. Some idea of what this means can only be grasped by those who have visited the factory and seen the amount of machinery it contains and the intricate nature of the process of manufacture by which the sugar is produced.

The factory is designed to treat 500 tons of beet and to manufacture up to 60 tons of sugar per day. The buildings cover an area of 6 acres, and the whole site extends to 24 acres. Next year it is proposed to double the capacity of the works.

The visit on Friday was at the invitation of the Corporation, and those who availed themselves of it were Messrs. George Darby, Pymoor; W Wallace, W Woods Green, and E Harrison, Little Downham; A E Barber, A Barber, and E J White, Soham; W Harradine, March; M Morris, J M Morris, H W Clark, C Kisby, J Levitt, C Levitt, Stonea; A J Morton, S Morton, W Bradshaw, B Palmer, and T Jones Wimblington; J Bates, W Bates, Manea; and W Stock, representing this journal. Mr W J Street, of Ely, the Corporation's agent, was in charge of the party, which travelled by saloon carriage, and thence by motor bus to Colwick.

Sir John Baird's welcome.

Having arrived at the factory, the visitors were conducted into the offices, and were introduced by Mr. J Shields, chief agriculturist of the Company, to Sir John Baird, MP., one of the directors. Mr Shields remarking that the visitors came from a very important beet growing territory.

Sir John welcomed the party and said he was delighted that so many had been able to come. In the course of an interesting speech, he remarked that the beet sugar industry was one of the best examples of the possibility of uniting the interests of the farming community with those of the industrial community.

Most of them in agriculture had thought that their interests had had to take second place to those of the people who lived on the factories, but sugar making was a good example of the absolute unity of their interests.

It was no use their growing beet unless they had a sugar factory, and unless the factory was efficiently run, it could not turn out good sugar and compete with the imported article. While

every country in Europe and America had decided to make its own sugar, experience had shown that we could grow sugar beet just as well here as in any other country of Europe.

And when it came to the process of manufacture, they were confident that they could manufacture sugar just as well as any other country. If, instead of buying sugar as in the past from abroad, or even from our Dominions, we decided to use our land for the production of sugar beet, which by the experience of the whole world, had been shown to be a very valuable crop in the rotation, it stood to reason that we should have a great deal more money circulating in the country, and more openings for employment, both in agriculture, and in manufacturing, whether in direct manufacture, such as they saw there, or the preliminary process of turning out the machinery: there was 3,000 tons of machinery there, to say nothing of the buildings.

The danger to the sugar industry was the growing up of a feeling of antagonism between the growers and the factory owners. The Anglo-Scottish Corporation wanted to avoid that. They wanted not to be competitors, but collaborators; they wanted to carry along the growers with them.

He hoped it would be appreciated that the Corporation had gone into the business with a certain amount of vigour. It was unprecedented to see a factory going, they had already turned out 2,000 tons of sugar, and worked up 18,000 tons of beet within less than a year of the cutting of the first sod.

They were doing their best, and they asked the growers to do the same. With regard to prices, he could only repeat what Lord Weir said to a Farmers Union deputation in London a couple of months ago.

Lord Weir said that when they had had experience and knew what the costs were, including the cost of overhead charges during the off season, they would be in a position, not in the light of somebody else's experience but of their own, to reconsider the whole matter, and whatever contract they made now, when the time came that they were able to tell from their own experience what the costs really were, they were quite prepared to discuss any modification of the contract in the light of that experience.

## The tour of inspection.

Accompanied by Sir John Baird, Mr Wiese, the general manager, and other officials of the Company, the visitors then proceeded on a tour of the factory. On the way dumps of beet were passed. Some of the beets were sending out fresh growths, and it was pointed out that these were the ones that had not been properly topped, and that this growth lessened the sugar content.

A visit was first paid to the room in which samples of beet are dealt with to determine the payment due to the growers. Tins were there, each containing a 28 lb sample taken from a truck. This sample is washed and any beets needing it are re-topped. The sample is then re weighed, and whatever loss is found is applied to the whole consignment, the object being to pay for all clean beets delivered, but not for soil or tops. The washed beets are then dealt with to ascertain the sugar content on which the grower is paid.

Passing into the main building, the visitors found themselves among the massive machinery of the factory, running at its full capacity in the conversion of the homely beet into the purest of refined sugar. A huge lift wheel, constructed of steel, with steel buckets, having picked up beets from some outside storage, was seen transferring them by means of a chute into a large tank known as the beet washer. Inside the washer, large wooden paddles attached to a central shaft were revolving, knocking the beets and very effectively washing them. As they were cleansed, the beets moved along the tank towards the other end than at which they had

entered. Here, they were discharged onto a roller conveyor or picking table, on which they were transported and dropped into an endless chain of buckets which lifted them to the very top of the high refinery building.

Following the course of the process of manufacture, the visitors ascended to the top of the building. Here the beets are deposited by the elevator into an automatic weighing machine. This keeps a check on the production. It records the weight of the beets passing through, and from the recorder can be seen just how much raw beet has been used up in the past hour, or, indeed, in any given period of operation. Chutes from the weighing machine, carry the beets to the floor below, where they enter the beet slicers, and are cut up into thin strips or “cossettes.”

## Extracting the juice.

Down these cossettes go to the floor below, where they reach one of the most interesting and important phases of their journey from beet to sugar. This is the diffusion cell floor, to the uninitiated, a confusing array of pipes and valves that are described as diffusion batteries. A succession of diffusion cells receives the cossettes, and as each cell is filled with them from the belt conveyor, it is closed tight and lukewarm water is introduced.

The water passes through cell by cell, picking up in each a certain amount of sugar from the cossettes. As it flows onward, the water passes through a screen in each cell, thus taking with it only sugar and no pulp whatever from the beet slices. Passing from cell to cell, the water also goes through heaters, each one hotter than the last, until before the final emergence as a juice, it is heated up to 75 degrees centigrade. Through valves, this juice flows into a measuring tank, while the pulp which is left behind, goes through a separate plant, is dried, and packed into bags for sale as an excellent and palatable cattle food.

The extracted juice then passes on through a bewildering maze of tanks which beggar description by a layman. First, the purifying agent, milk of lime is added to the raw juice, causing the substances which tend to prevent crystallisation to be precipitated in the form of solids which can be filtered out. Then the excess of lime is neutralised in carbonation tanks by blowing carbon dioxide gas through the juice. Next, the juice is freed from the solid matter formed by the action of the lime and carbon dioxide, by pumping it through filter presses, by forcing it through closely-woven heavyweight cotton cloths sewn on to metal screens, every particle of solid matter is removed from the juice, which is transformed into a clear, almost colourless liquid.

The process is repeated of treating the juice with lime and carbon dioxide gas and then filtering it. In each case, the juice passes through heaters before being filtered, keeping at a temperature slightly under boiling point. Then sulphurous gases passed through the juice to set free the lime salts, and after a further heating, the juice undergoes a third filtration. After this, it emerges as what is known as “purified thin juice,” ready to be boiled down into sugar.

## Wonderful mechanical pumps.

In the course of the above-described process, more complicated than the description would suggest, the juice is carried up and down through pipes from floor to floor of the factory by means of powerful pumps. These mechanical pumps are an important feature, for by their use, the factory is able to produce a sugar which at no stage of its making is touched by hand or allowed to come in contact with even the impurities of the air. Always in tanks or pipes, the juice is kept absolutely pure until it becomes sugar. From the evaporator supply tank into which

the “purified thin juice” passed, it is now pumped into the first of a series of five huge receptacles, known as evaporators. In these it is boiled from a thin into a thick juice, as thick, in fact, as possible consistent with the further handling of evaporators. In boiling, it is interesting to add, is done under a vacuum process in order to prevent caramelising of the juice, and by reason of this vacuum process, the boiling down takes place at a comparatively low temperature.

Further purifying treatment is applied to the juice, including its passage through sand filters. It is then pumped up to supply tanks, from which it passes into the first vacuum pan, in which it is boiled down to a sugar crystal. From the bottom of the vacuum pan, the boiled mass of sugar and syrup is dropped to a large mixer below. This acts as a storage tank to feed the centrifugal machines in which the sugar crystals are separated from the syrup.

It was a fascinating sight to the visitors to see the quantities of moist brown sugar shot into the centrifugal’s and transformed into pure white sugar crystals. Yet the action is simple. When explained. The secret is wholly mechanical. In each of the circular Tanks is a fast-revolving drum or basket with a fine wire screen inside it. The basket is not rigid, but is suspended by a ball bearing on the shaft from which it is driven from above, and it is on this joint that its centrifugal motion is secured. The basket revolves at the rate of 1,100 revolutions per minute, and the force of the movement throws the syrup through the fine copper screen and retains only the crystals, with the result that when the machine is stopped, the basket is seen to contain a pure white mass of sugar.

To the uninitiated, the action seems almost like magic, but in reality, it is accomplished by mechanical ingenuity.

The brown syrup removed from the sugar crystals is returned to the vacuum pans for further crystallisation, and thus all the obtainable sugar is secured.

From the centrifugal’s, the sugar is mechanically transferred to the floor below, where it is received by an elevator and conveyed once again to the top of the building. Here it is dropped into a large bin which feeds it into driers, huge cylindrical drums through which steam-heated air is drawn by powerful fans. The sugar works its way through the revolving drums against the current of warm dry air, and is deposited, quite dry into the cooler. Having passed through this, it is lifted by another elevator into the finished sugar bin, from which it is drawn off by the packing machines. These automatically fill the hundredweight bags with the exact weight required, and the bags are sewn up by machines and transferred to the store in readiness for dispatch to the purchasers.

A visit was paid to the boiler and power rooms, where the up-to-date equipment for the driving of the factory was admired, and finally the company were shown the department in which the exhausted beet pulp is dried and packed for sale as cattle food.

Altogether, the tour of the factory was an experience of extreme interest to men engaged in the production of the beet which forms the raw material of the industry. The intricate nature of the process of sugar manufacture caused general surprise, and with that sensation was coupled with deep admiration of the completeness and thoroughness of the process, its high mechanical efficiency, and its perfect cleanliness.

And, viewing the finished article, it was impossible not to experience a feeling of pride and satisfaction, at the thought that here was an entirely British product, in an infant industry, possessing great potentialities to British agriculture.

Entertained to luncheon.

After the inspection of the factory, the visitors were conveyed by motor vehicles to the Victoria Station Hotel, Nottingham, where they were entertained to luncheon by the Beet Sugar Corporation. Sir John Baird presided, and the factory officials were also present.

Luncheon over, the chairman voiced the pleasure which the visit had given to himself and the factory representatives. He said he hoped the visitors were satisfied with what they had seen and with the way in which the factory was being run. He admitted that the company were rather proud of it, for it had been a triumph of good judgement and splendid work. They were especially indebted, he said, to Mr Wiese, who had had unrivalled experience in sugar manufacture. Next year, they hope to have the capacity of the factory doubled; that could be done if they could rely upon the farmers to supply the beet necessary to feed the factory. They were also erecting new factories at Kidderminster and Spalding.

Mr M Morris proposed a vote of thanks to the Company for their hospitality, and in doing so inquired as to the prospect of beet growers receiving a bonus. The Chairman replied that the Corporation were waiting to see how they stood, and they should know fairly soon. Then the question would arise of the payments to farmers, and in the light of their experience, they were prepared to meet the growers and reconsider the terms in conjunction with them. The government were giving a large subsidy, and it was not being given to put large sums of money into the pockets of capitalists, or of farmers.

The intention of the subsidy, and the intention of that Corporation, was to endeavour to establish a new industry, and to establish it on a sound footing. It was for the purpose of enabling people to buy their experience. They could not expect the farmer to branch out into some new line, and bear the whole of the cost of the experiment himself. So far as the Corporation were concerned, they recognised that the subsidy was there for the purpose of enabling them to buy their experience, and it had not been sufficient to cause capitalists to tumble over one another in their endeavour to pour money into sugar factories.

Sir John pointed out that there were advantages to the farmer in the introduction of beet into the rotation, and said it was the Corporation’s business to perfect their methods, and increase their efficiency, to an extent that would enable them to pay a satisfactory price for the beet, and still make a profit on the sugar.

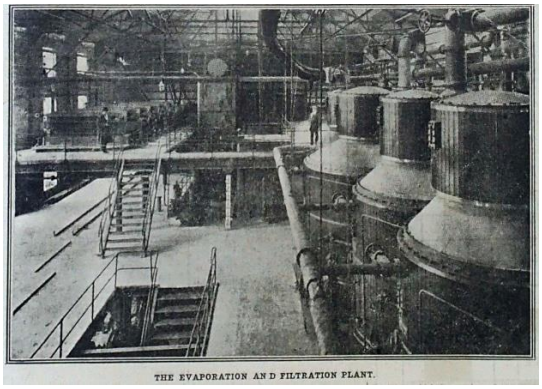
They confidently hoped that they would achieve those objects, and that the industry would grow up with the agricultural and manufacturing sides, not as daggers drawn, but understanding each other's position, and advancing together hand in hand, in the building up of an industry which would be of enormous advantage to the country. (Applause).

Mr George Darby and Mr Wallace expressed thanks to the Chairman, the former stating that he thought the beet factories would have to come on the same terms as the manure companies in the matter of the cost of railway transit.

The Chairman answered that this would have to be discussed in the light of experience.

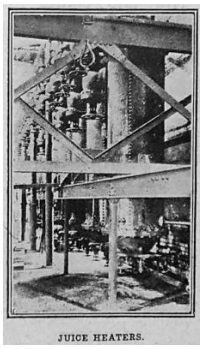
After some further discussion, the company rose, the visitors afterwards entraining at Nottingham for home.

Three photographs below, showing the evaporation and filtration plant, the vacuum pumps, and the juice heaters.



THE EVAPORATION AN D FILTRATION PLANT.

VACUUM PUMPS.



JUICE HEATERS.

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Advertisement.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 6th, 1925.

Advertisement reads:

**The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ltd.,**

**ELY.**

**Increase of Price**

**FOR**

**SUGAR BEET.**

The revised terms of our three-years' Contracts for the Seasons 1925, 1926 and 1927, for Beets of 15½% sugar-content, are:—

**EITHER**

A price based on the average sale price of our sugar, **plus one-seventh,** WITH AN ADDITIONAL 13/8, and a BONUS ON TONNAGE worked by this Factory,

**OR,**

A MINIMUM GUARANTEED PRICE of 49/- for Season 1925, and 54/- for Seasons 1926 and 1927.

The Grower will receive WHICHEVER IS THE HIGHER PRICE.

The above has been approved by the N.F.U.

Contract forms and further information from the Factory, or from our Agents on the Markets.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited., Ely.

Increase of price for Sugar Beet. The revised terms of our three-years' Contracts, for the Seasons 1925, 1926 and 1927, for Beets of 15 ½ percent sugar content, are: --

**Either.**

A price based on the average sale price of our sugar**, plus one-seventh**, with an additional 13/8, and a bonus on tonnage worked by this factory,

**Or.**

A **Minimum guaranteed price** of 49 shillings for season 1925, and 54 shillings for Seasons 1926 and 1927.

The grower will receive **Whichever is the higher price.**

The above has been approved by the National Farmers Union.

Contract forms and further information from the Factory, or from our Agents on the Markets.

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New Beet factory at Ely.

The Spalding Guardian, Saturday, March the 21st, 1925.

Photographs and caption below:

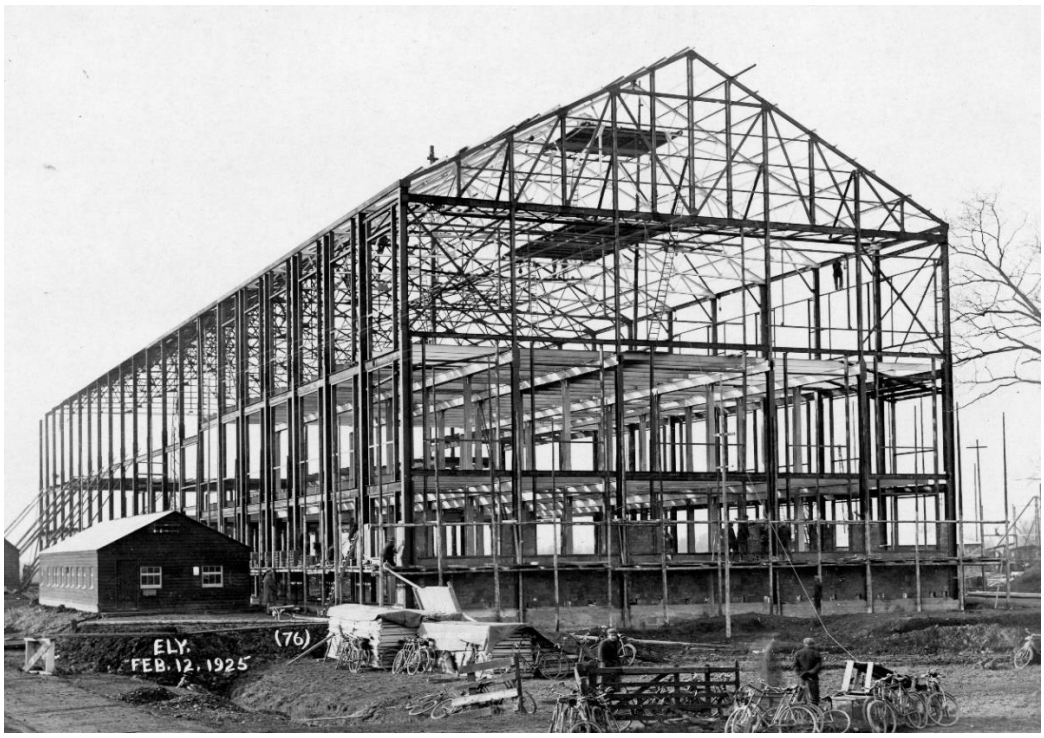
Caption reads:

NEW BEET FACTORY at ELY.

THIS ENORMOUS SKELETON STRUCTURE is the main building, looking from the North, of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory now constructing. The photo was kindly loaned us by the proprietors of the Company. The space between the girders which form the walls is being filled up by large bricks a foot square. Much of the heavy machinery, boilers, etc., is being installed as the building progresses. Contracts for growing the beet have been taken up well, and the management confidently anticipate that they will be able to work the factory to full capacity—1,000 tons of finished sugar per day. Mr. Willem Styn, one of the pioneers of the industry in England, has been appointed Manager, and a house is being built for him quite close to the factory.

This enormous skeleton structure is the main building, looking from the North, of the Ely Sugar Beet factory now constructing. The photo was kindly loaned to us by the proprietors of the Company. The space between the girders which form the walls is being filled up by large bricks a foot square. Much of the heavy machinery, boilers, etc., is being installed as the building progresses. Contracts for growing the beet have been taken up well, and the management confidently anticipate that they will be able to work the factory to full capacity. Mr Willemstyn, one of the pioneers of the industry in England, has been appointed Manager, and a house is being built for him quite close to the factory.

An original photograph of this article is shown below, and a photograph of the house built for the Manager, Mr Willemstyn follows.



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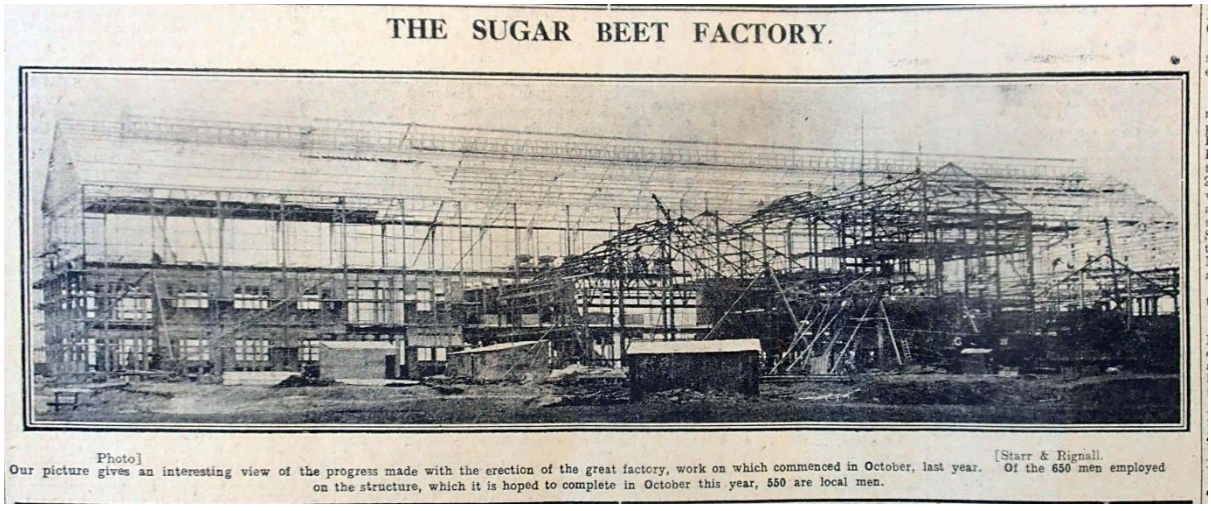
The Sugar Beet Factory.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, April the 10th, 1925.

Photograph and caption.

Caption reads: Our picture gives an interesting view of the progress made with the erection of the great factory, work on which commenced in October last year. Of the 650 men employed on the structure, which it is hoped to complete in October this year, 550 are local men.



THE SUGAR BEET FACTORY.

Photo] [Starr & Rignall.

Our picture gives an interesting view of the progress made with the erection of the great factory, work on which commenced in October, last year. Of the 650 men employed on the structure, which it is hoped to complete in October this year, 550 are local men.

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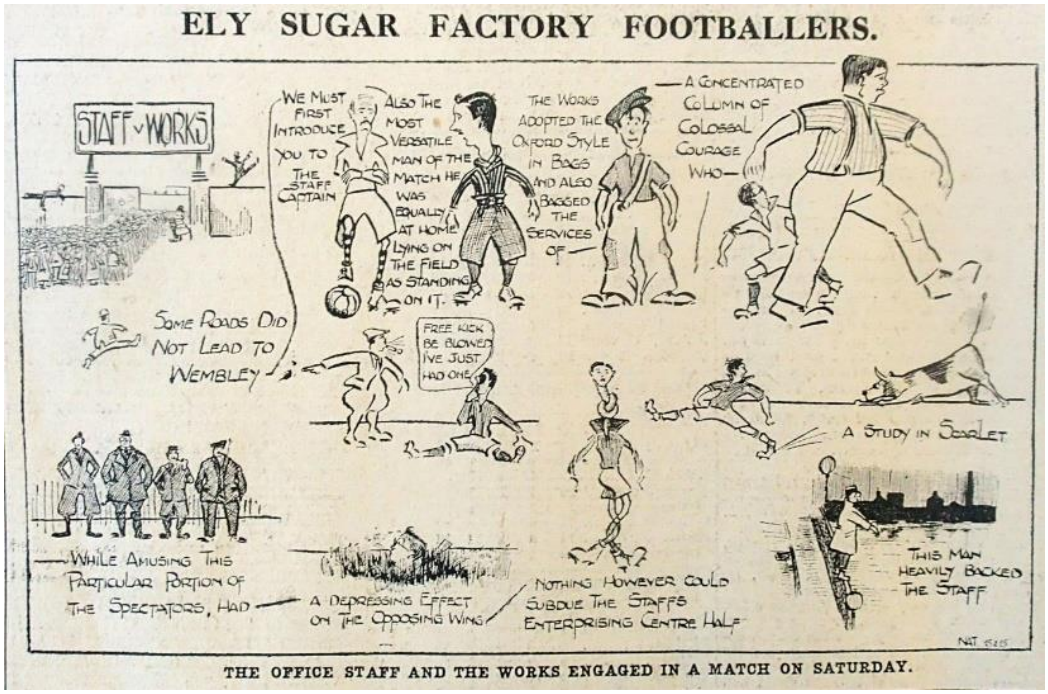
Ely Sugar Factory Footballers.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, May the 1st, 1925.

A cartoon and caption below:

Caption reads: The office staff and the works engaged in a match on Saturday.


ELY SUGAR FACTORY FOOTBALLERS.
STAFF v WORKS
WE MUST FIRST INTRODUCE YOU TO THE STAFF CAPTAIN
ALSO THE MOST VERSATILE MAN OF THE MATCH HE WAS EQUALLY AT HOME LYING ON THE FIELD AS STANDING ON IT.
THE WORKS ADOPTED THE OXFORD STYLE IN BAGS AND ALSO BAGGED THE SERVICES OF
A CONCENTRATED COLUMN OF COLOSSAL COURAGE WHO—
SOME ROADS DID NOT LEAD TO WEMBLEY
FREE KICK BE BLOWED I'VE JUST HAD ONE
A STUDY IN SCARLET
WHILE AMUSING THIS PARTICULAR PORTION OF THE SPECTATORS, HAD
A DEPRESSING EFFECT ON THE OPPOSING WING
NOTHING HOWEVER COULD SUBDUE THE STAFF'S ENTERPRISING CENTRE HALF
THIS MAN HEAVILY BACKED THE STAFF
THE OFFICE STAFF AND THE WORKS ENGAGED IN A MATCH ON SATURDAY.

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A Giant Boiler for Ely Factory.

The Spalding Guardian, Saturday, May the 9th, 1925.

Photograph and caption below:

Caption reads: This Leviathan boiler for the Ely Sugar Beet Factory arrives in Lynn docks from Rotterdam. There are two of them in the Ely Sugar Beet Factory equipment, each 6 feet long, and weighing 25 ½ tons.

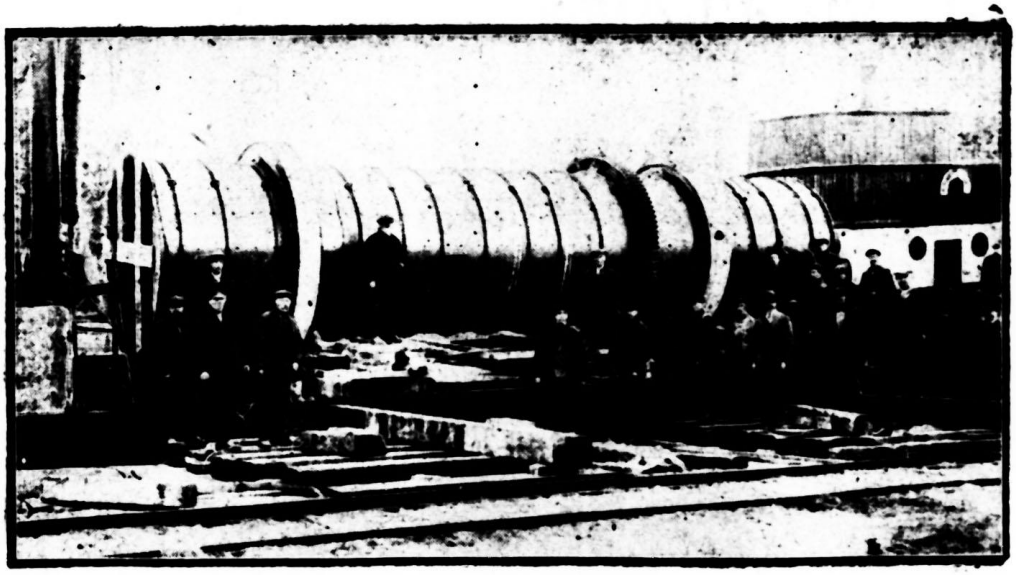
The photograph below shows one of the boilers being loaded on to the only truck which the London and North Eastern Railway had which was big enough to take it.

The boilers are said to be the heaviest single part of any cargo ever brought to Lynn.

Side note: There are errors in this printed article. It mentions that “the boilers” are 6 feet long, but are obviously much longer, possibly 60 feet.

They are also referred to as “boilers”, but they are in fact pulp driers, manufactured by the German engineering company, Büttner

# A Giant BOILER for ELY FACTORY.



THIS LEVIATHAN BOILER for the Ely Sugar Beet Factory arri ves in Lynn Docks from Rotterdam. There are two of them in the Ely Sugar Beet Factory equip ment, each 6ft. long and weighing 23½ tons. The above photograph shows one of the boilers being lo aded on to the only truck which the L.N.E.R. had which was big enough to take it. The boilers are sa id to be the haviest single part of any cargo ever brought to Lynn.

(Courtesy: "Lynn News").

***

Situations Vacant.

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Tuesday, June the 30th, 1925.

Advertisement reads:

Bricklayers, experienced, Wanted for Furnace Work: 2 shillings per hour, plus expenses. – Write: Foreman Proctor, King, Taudevin and Gregson, Limited.,

Care of Messrs. Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited., Ely, Cambs

BRICKLAYERS, experienced, Wanted for Furnace Work; 2s. per hour, plus expenses.—Write Foreman Proctor, King, Taudevin and Gregson, Ltd., c/o Messrs. Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ltd., Ely, Cambs.

***

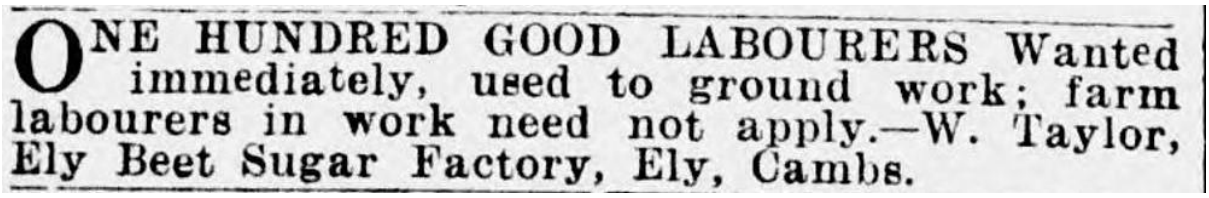
Situations Vacant.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, July the 3rd, 1925.

Advertisement reads:

One Hundred Good Labourers Wanted immediately, used to ground work: farm labourers in work need not apply.

W Taylor, Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs.


ONE HUNDRED GOOD LABOURERS Wanted immediately, used to ground work; farm labourers in work need not apply.—W. Taylor, Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs.

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Housing Sugar Beet Workers.

Ely Jam Factory converted into a home.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, July the 3rd, 1925.

After a considerable period of inactivity, the Jam factory in Brays Lane, Ely, now has its door flung wide open, not for the purpose for which it was originally intended, but to provide accommodation for a portion of the army of workers employed in the construction of the Beet Sugar Factory.

The task of looking after the comfortable housing and feeding of the 56 men already there, has been left in the hands of Mr. J Scarfe, of the White Hart Hotel, Ely, and in conjunction with other local tradesmen, he has scored a measure of success, upon which he is to be congratulated.

The various sleeping and dining halls have been splendidly arranged. Excellent single beds have been set out with a precision reminiscent of the Army days, ample accommodation being provided for the three cooks to serve up appetising meals, and the facilities for the men's ablutions are all that could be desired.

The men at present housed in the Jam Factory are composed of joiners and fitters, but it is expected that within a week or so, the task of the enterers will be made considerably heavier, because of the invasion of another 100 men.

Happiness and contentment reign supreme in this Jam Factory home, where bacon and eggs are served for breakfast, and a hot dinner at 7:30 each evening, as well as supper before retiring to bed. The men take their lunch with them to the works.

The local firms working in conjunction with Mr Scarfe, to so well equip the factory, include Pledger’s successors, Messrs Cutlack, Mr Rickwood, Mr S E Key, Messrs Stubbings, Kempton, Bonnett, Cross, and H Kempton.

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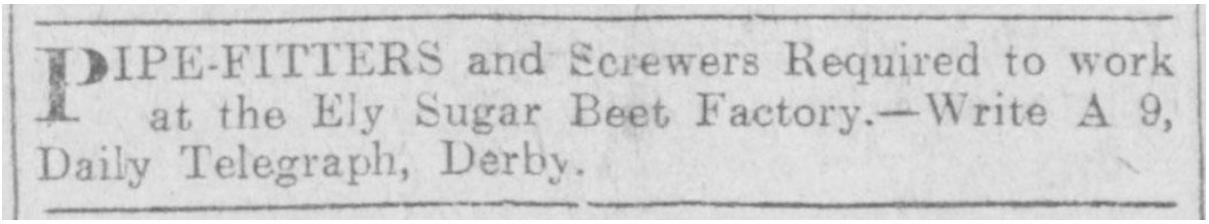
Situations Vacant.

The Derby Daily Telegraph, Wednesday, July the 8th, 1925.

Advertisement reads:

Pipe-fitters and Screwers Required to work at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory.

Write A 9, Daily Telegraph, Derby.


PIPE-FITTERS and Screwers Required to work at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory.—Write A 9, Daily Telegraph, Derby.

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The Sugar Factory Accident.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, July the 31st, 1925.

A verdict of "Accidental death" was recorded by the Cambridge Borough Coroner, (Mr. G A Wootten), at an inquest held at Addenbrooke's Hospital on Friday, July 24, into the circumstances surrounding the death of Thomas Sidney Magness, of 16, Radnor Street, Peckham. Deceased, who was 70 years of age, was a carpenter, working at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and, as reported last week, met with an accident on the light railway there on Monday while getting his tools from underneath a truck. His left foot was severed, and he was admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital, where he died on Tuesday.

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Knocked Down by Truck.

Carpenter's fatal Accident at Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

Was warning given?

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, July the 31st, 1925.

A verdict of "Accidental death" was recorded by the Borough Coroner, (Mr. G.A. Wootten), at an inquest held at Addenbrooke's Hospital last Friday morning, into the circumstances surrounding the death of Thomas Sidney Magness, of 16, Radnor-street, Peckham.

Deceased, who was 70 years of age, was a carpenter, working at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and met with an accident on the light railway there on Monday, while getting his tools from

underneath a truck. His left foot was severed, and he was admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital, where he died on Tuesday.

Mr. A.K. Campbell, (of Messrs. Hall and Campbell), Ely, represented the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited., and Messrs. Hal Williams and Company., of High Holborn, constructional engineers, and Mr. S J Miller, of Cambridge, appeared for Messrs. F D Huntington, Limited., Hanover-square, London, engineers and contractors, (the deceased's employers). Mr. H W Atkinson, H.M. Inspector of Factories, was also present.

John William Magness, of 29, Old Kent-road, London S.E., confectioner, gave evidence of identification, and said that he last saw his father alive about five weeks ago, when he left London to work at Ely. He was a strong, healthy man, and his sight and hearing were good.

Tools under a truck.

Harry Littleboy, of 17, Waterside Ely, a labourer at the factory, said that on Monday he was working near the railway track, which was on the south side of the factory. He had known Magness about three weeks, having come into contact with him while at work. Magness was working on the track that morning, doing woodwork for the flumes. Witness was moving gravel, and about 12:25, Magness said. "I am just going to fetch my tools from under the truck which is beside me."

The coroner: was it not an unusual place to put tools?

Witness: In my opinion, it would be awkward to put them anywhere else. He had put them there because of the rain.

Was it a small truck? –No, it was a ten-ton truck, but it was unloaded.

Replying to further questions, witness said that there were other trucks both in front and behind this one, and one engine was on in front.

The coroner: Did you see him go to get his tools?

Witness: Just as he was in a bending position, the trucks moved and hit him in the hip, turned him round and twisted his left leg over the right. I shouted to the driver to stop, but unfortunately, I saw his leg was under the wheel. I shouted for help, and immediately sent for first aid.

Was warning given?

Was any warning given by the driver that the trucks were going to move on? --Not on this occasion. I heard no whistle blown, and no one came along to give instructions to clear the track. There was a number of men about there.

Were these trucks likely to be there a permanent time or were they likely to move on at any moment?

You never know when trucks are to be shifted. On this occasion, the trucks had been standing there for probably two hours, and no whistle was sounded. As it was so close to the dinner hour, the man went to get his tools.

Could it be reasonably expected that the trucks would be moved at any moment?

None whatever. He was working there a considerable time during the morning. The trucks did not shift until about three minutes before the dinner whistle blew at 12:30.

In reply to further questions, witness said that minor accidents were fairly frequent, and there was an ambulance at the factory.

The coroner: Are there men qualified to render first aid?

Witness: The man who attended to deceased knew his job.

Is it not unusual for workmen to cross the metals?

No, they are always doing it. “I have seen a man come along and shout, ‘Keep clear of the trucks’” said witness, in reply to further questions.

Mr. Atkinson: You have never stored tools underneath trucks?

Witness: No.

Do you know whether carpenter’s have had instructions not to put tools under trucks?

I don’t know of that.

In reply to Mr. Campbell, witness said that a steam navvy on the place had a whistle, and there was another at the factory. Close by was the London and North Eastern mainline, on which there was a great deal of traffic.

Mr. Campbell: I take it that whistles are frequently heard?
Witness: Yes.

It would be no exaggeration to say that whistles are blowing all day long?
That is so.

Do you think it possible, inconsequence of knowing that whistles are blowing so repeatedly, that you might not take particular notice of this one?

We took particular notice on this occasion.

Why did you take particular notice on this occasion?

Because the trucks moved without the whistle being blown and we saw the man in agony.

Are there any other occasions you remember that the whistle has not been blown?

Not to my knowledge.

Did you see the driver and the shunter?

No, I did not see either of them.

In reply to Mr. Miller, witness said that the dinner whistle had not blown when the trucks moved. He had been unloading these trucks all the morning. The man's tools had been under the truck all the morning, and he, (Magness), was working about three feet from the track. He was quite sure the whistle did not blow.

Mr Miller: What makes you particularly remember it was not blown?

Witness: Because after I saw the trucks move on, it drew my attention immediately to the fact that the whistle had not blown, and there were others there who said the same thing.

Frederick Victor Beavis, also a labourer at the factory, said that he was working near the railway track. When coming across a footbridge with a barrow he heard someone shout, and

he saw the man in a bending position with a bag of tools in his hand. “I think the man slipped when he got the bump from the truck,” witness added, “and the wheel went over his left leg.”

The coroner: Could you tell us whether the man in charge of the engine sounded his whistle before moving on?
Witness: If the man sounded the whistle, I did not hear it.
Mr. Miller: When the trucks are moved on, warning should be given?
Witness: I should say it should.

The question arose as to whether the driver and shunter should be called, Mr Miller objecting, because they had been in court during the hearing of some of the evidence.

After some argument it was decided to call the driver, the coroner pointing out that because the witness had been in court it did not prevent him giving evidence.

Engine drivers’ story.

George Scott, of the Elms, The Common, Ely, the driver, was then called. He said he had 27 years’ experience. About 12:30 on Monday he was working on the engine.

The coroner: Before you move those trucks, what is it your duty to do?

Witness: The first duty is to open the whistle, which I do eleven times out of twelve. I had my shunter with me, as it is always necessary, because there is always someone about.

Can you swear you opened your whistle at this time?

I can honestly swear that, and I am sorry to have to contradict the evidence of another witness. The whistle is open so much that I expect the men take no notice of it when it is sounded.

Replying to further questions from the coroner, witness said that there were three different contractors at the factory, and they had to set all the trucks separately for each contractor. On this occasion, the trucks were in three separate positions, and therefore he had to move on three different occasions to get them coupled up by the shunter, who was on the ground. Every time he moved; he sounded his whistle. There were twelve trucks on, on that occasion, and he pulled up because some sandstone fell from one of the trucks. He opened his whistle and he had moved only about two feet when he heard a shout, and he stopped immediately.

The coroner: If the man went to fetch his tools from under the truck would the shunter see him?
Witness: No; he was hit by the third truck from the engine, and there were 11 or 12 on the train.
Mr. Littleboy (recalled), said that it was the fourth truck from the engine that struck Magness.
Mr, Scott: It was the first wheel of the third truck from the engine.

Replying to Mr. Miller, Scott said that there was always a lot of men working on both sides of the line, and it was dangerous.

Mr. Miller: Have you known a time when someone has told the men to stand clear?

Witness: Only my shunter. It is his duty to warn people to stand clear and mine to sound the whistle, which I always do.

Mr Campbell: Did you take the usual precautions before you moved?

Witness: Certainly.
Mr. Miller: Did anyone complain to you at the time that you did not sound your whistle?
Witness: No one spoke to me at all.
There have been complaints that the whistle was not sounded?
More complaints that I have sounded it. I am being abused all day long for sounding it too much.

Cause of death.

Dr. D D R Dale, house surgeon at Addenbrooke's Hospital, said that Magness was admitted at 2:15 p.m. on July the 20th.

His left foot was severed, and he had a severe wound of the right leg. He was also suffering from considerable loss of blood and profound shock. The injuries were consistent with having been run over by a truck.

The man died the same day. Death being due to shock and cerebral anaemia.

The doctor was questioned as to the first aid rendered before admission, and said it was done quite efficiently. The tourniquet, although improvised out of handkerchiefs, was efficient.

The coroner, in recording a verdict of "Accidental death," said that there was a conflict of evidence as to whether proper warning was given by the driver. It was a new factory, and there was a great number of men working there.

Accidents were frequently happening and under the Board of Trade regulations they were bound to have an efficient first aid ambulance corps there, so that perhaps it was not part of his duty to emphasise the necessity of that. He expressed sympathy with the relatives.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. Miller associated themselves, on behalf of their clients, with the expression of sympathy.

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Situations Vacant.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, August the 14th, 1925.

Advertisement reads:

Good Carpenters wanted immediately. –Apply, Local Labour Exchange for full particulars, or Mr W H Taylor, Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs.

GOOD CARPENTERS Wanted immediately.—Apply, Local Labour Exchange for full particulars or Mr. W. H. Taylor, Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs.

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Ely Sugar Factory.

Likely to be Completed Within a Month.

Bright Prospects.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, August the 28th 1925.

Such good progress has been made since activities first commenced in October last, that it is expected that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory will be fully erected and equipped within the next four weeks or so. When all construction work has been completed, 1,200 tons of beet will be used each day, which means that about 100 tons of sugar will be extracted daily.

A visit to the factory proves both interesting and educational. A peep, first of all, into the main machinery hall, reveals a surprising quantity of massive machinery, and though floors have yet to be there constructed, high aloft is to be seen a number of huge batteries and stills. They are the diffusion batteries and other vats and retorts, which have been placed in position as the building has progressed, and fittings and connections are at present being fixed.

Powerful plants, which are to provide energy for the factory, are seen in the powerhouse, and boiler house: large, heavy machines being bedded in huge and deep foundations of concrete. A few weeks ago, railways ran through the hall, with trucks bearing boilers and other necessary parts there on. At present, nearly everything is in its place, and doubtless, with the advent of early October, all machinery will be in working order, and the beet will be seen going in one side of the factory and sugar brought out from the other.

Two overhead cranes have been installed. These are worked by electrical power and mounted on rails, and if need be, both can be used to lift the beet out of the railway trucks, which will be run beneath them on a double set of lines, or they can be run along to the quayside and used to empty barges. Their “grabs” have a capacity of 12 hundredweight, so a large number of railway waggons could soon be emptied.

The whole frontage of the river at the quayside has been concreted and the riverbed dredged in cleansed, and unloading berths provided for 30 barges. Other barges can be brought alongside the first string, and obviously be within reach of the cranes jib. As is well known, there are farmers who own farms which are situated several miles from a railway station, but are near the river, and with a view to facilitating the transportation of beet from such places, the Factory Company are having their own fleet of steel barges, with capacities varying from 20 to 25 tons. They will be towed by tugs propelled by oil engines and several of them having arrived, they are used for conveying machinery from Lynn Docks.

Gravitation forms one of the factories power and economy resources, and reduces unnecessary handling and labour to the minimum. When the beet arrive, they are placed into what is known as a flume, a huge enclosure, with concrete walls and holding capacity of 20,000 tons.

Along the bottom are concreted channels into which the beet will be “fed”. Once in the channels, they are forced by compressed air along large pipes into the washing tanks on the 1st floor.

As a matter of fact, they need little washing after passing through the flume channels and compressed air chute.

From the washing machines they pass on to the automatic weighing machines, where they are weighed and then transferred to the slicing mills, where they are shredded and afterwards passed into the diffusion batteries.

These extract the sugar liquor. After various stages of refining and treatment, the evaporation and crystallisation tanks are reached and the sugar is placed in bags.

Other large installations are now in position for dealing with the beet pulp after the batteries have finished with it, and for the other residuals, such as molasses.

A huge tank is being erected to receive the latter, and drying chambers and a storehouse of great dimensions are in readiness for the pulp.

Ten big boilers, which are heated by automatic feeding chain grates, have been erected in the boiler house. Apart from the steam required to work the electricity-producing plant, a large quantity is required in the various stages of the treatment of the beet. The offices and laboratories are in the main building.

Standard gauge railway lines are to run from the London and North Eastern Railway line right up to the beet store and sugar store, and a light railway will be maintained for use about the factory. One is used in the construction work.

About 300 men were engaged on the factory site when activities began there, but 1,300 are now employed. A fair amount of unskilled labour is likely to be absorbed when the factory has been built.

Conditions bid fair for the start of the factory work, for the season has been extremely good for beet, and it is more than probable that the crop will yield more prolifically and be of even better sugar content than last year, when an average of something like 12 tons to the acre was grown by farmers in the district.

Ninety-six percent of local growers have contracted to grow beet for the factory for three years, and it is anticipated that the few who have not done so this year will do so next.

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Painter falls 95 feet.

Missed by mates on factory top.

Ely, Cambridge, Monday.

The Daily News, Tuesday, September the 1st, 1925.

Geoffrey Brown, (21), a painter, of Norwich, when working today on the top of the Ely beet sugar factory, was suddenly missed by his workmates. They found he had fallen to the earth, 95 feet below.

The fall was broken by projecting constructions, and this saved his life. He was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, suffering from a broken thigh and severe injuries to the head.

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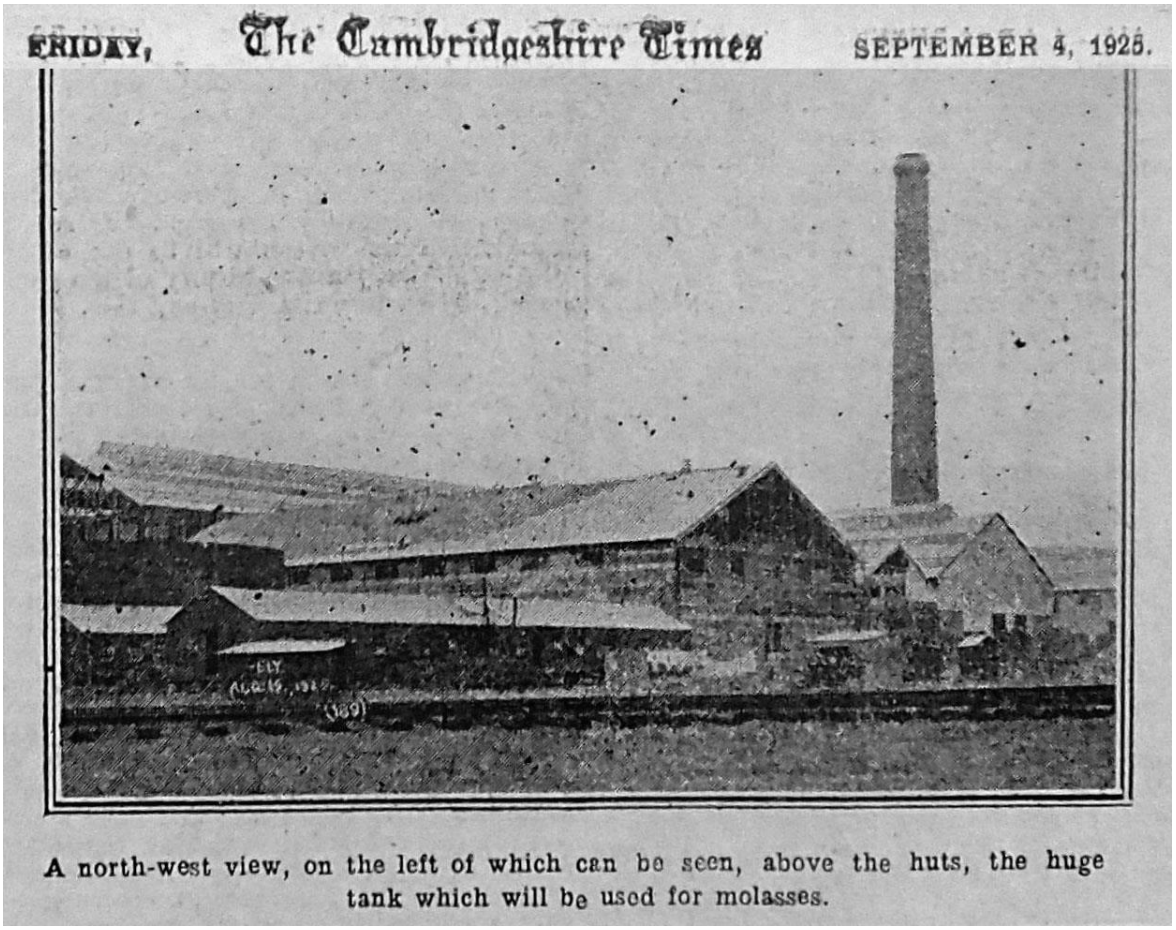
A North-West View of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 4th, 1925.

Photograph and caption below.

Caption reads:

A north-west view, on the left of which can be seen, above the huts, the huge tank which will be used for molasses.


FRIDAY, The Cambridgeshire Times SEPTEMBER 4, 1925.
A north-west view, on the left of which can be seen, above the huts, the huge tank which will be used for molasses.

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Workman's 95 Feet Fall.

Crash through Sugar Factory roof.

The Bury Free Press, Saturday, September the 5th, 1925.

Geoffrey Brown (21), of Cantley, near Norwich, met with a serious accident whilst painting at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory on Monday.

He was engaged on the condensers about 95 feet from the ground, and apparently slipped from a plank, which was held in position by wire lashing.

Brown fell headlong and, in his descent, struck the asbestos roofing of the factory. Through this he crashed onto some scaffolding inside. From this he rolled and fell a distance of about 70 feet onto some metal pipes, which were lying on the ground not far from a concreted construction containing six feet of water.

He was conscious when picked up, and was later removed to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, suffering from a broken thigh, a severe cut on the head, and, it is feared, internal injuries.

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Beet Sugar.

The Western Daily Press, Bristol, Tuesday, October the 6th, 1925.

The opening of a new sugar factory at Ely is a welcome reminder of the great changes that are taking place quietly in this branch of British industry. The encouragement of the growing and manufacture of beet sugar is not a party question nowadays, –the Labour Government, it will be remembered, took up the idea with great enthusiasm.

But it is not generally realised, perhaps, to what extent the movement has grown. We have already six or seven factories at work, and about 60,000 acres of land under sugar beet. The immense importance of the industry lies in the fact that the factories provide employment in rural districts at a time of the year when work on the land is the most slack.

From October to January, the factories are at work, making the sugar from the beets already grown, and when we reach the stage at which a couple of hundred factories are at work, there is bound to be an enormous, and even revolutionary change, in the condition of life in our villages.

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Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

Opening by Minister of Agriculture, on the 15th October.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 9th, 1925.

The equipment of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory at Adelaide is now nearing completion, and it is considered that everything will be in order for the official opening on Thursday, October the 15th.

It is anticipated that a distinguished company will be present, and the official opening will be performed by the Right Honourable, Edward F L Wood, MP, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Practically all the machinery is now in position, and the connecting processes are well advanced. Progressive continuity of treatment is one of the essential features of beet sugar manufacture, and it is now possible to realise the internal arrangement of this huge factory, although at first sight, the numerous machines are rather bewildering to the lay visitor.

It would not convey much information to speak of cossette conveyors, carbonation tanks, vacuum pans, and other intricate machines which are erected, and soon will be performing their hundred and one functions. The term “cossette” is used in respect of the beets after washing and slicing. It is as cossette that the roots are launched upon their mysterious journey through huge vats, retorts, and purifiers, to emerge as sugar, molasses and pulp of a residual nature

Many hundreds of hands will find work at the factory, and a large amount of the positions are open to both experienced and non-experienced men. Naturally, the technical staff will be experienced men, and in this respect, the factory is indeed fortunate, as the supply of skilled men is assured.

The various buildings comprise of:

| | |
|---|---|
| Two sheds; | 450 feet by 45 feet. |
| Two more; | 200 feet by 52 feet and 29 feet. |
| Two others; | 280 feet by 54 feet and 29 feet. |
| The main building consists of a dried pulp shed; | 164 feet by 82 feet. |
| A pulp drying and beet washing shed; | 164 feet by 82 feet. |
| Engine room, lime building, etc; | 112 feet by 82 feet. |
| Main machinery hall and sugar house; | 276 feet by 82 feet. |
| Boiler house; | 186 feet by 82 feet. |
| Repair shop; | 58 feet by 48 feet. |
| Sugar store; | 192 feet by 84 feet. |
| Offices; | 28 feet by 32 feet. |

The height of the main building from plate to plate, is 52 feet, 6 inches, and others 26 feet, 3 inches.

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The Growing of Sugar Beet.

Proposed factory at Yeovil.

Captain W W Shaw, MP., Appeals to Wiltshire Farmers.

The Wiltshire Times, Saturday, October the 10th, 1925.

Sir: In view of the fact that the official opening of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory by the Minister of Agriculture is to take place on October the 15th, at which I am due to attend, I would like to remind the farmers in this section of the county, that a factory is in contemplation at Yeovil. There are at present no less than six factories, situated in different parts of the country, either completed, or in course of completion.

Now, the very existence of these factories is dependent on a full supply of sugar beetroot, in order that they may be kept fully employed in producing from them the white granulated sugar.

This again, depends on the amount of enterprising spirit shown by the farmers in sowing their fields with sugar beet; and I now make a special appeal to the Wiltshire farmers in particular, to see to it, that they do their best towards producing as large a crop as possible for the supply of the factory, which will be situated in our neighbourhood, namely, Yeovil.

It is computed that the capacity of this factory will be 1,200 tons of beet per day, which will require the cultivation of 10,000 acres of beet during each season. It is now, therefore, up to the farmers to do their part.

I realise that not all the land is fit for its production, by reason of the heavy nature of some of the soil, but on the other hand, there is plenty that is capable of producing first class beets for sugar production. Let it not be said, that our farmers are lacking in the necessary push and energy to keep abreast of the times, and that they leave to others the splendid chances that investigation, and chemical research have opened up to them.

It has been demonstrated beyond dispute, that we can produce beet of sugar yielding quantity and quality equal to and better than any produced in Germany and Austria, –and yet, we imported from those two countries alone before the Great War, 1,200,000 tons of beet sugar per annum. It is interesting to note, that according to the statistics of the Soviet Sugar Trust, it is estimated that no further importation of sugar will be necessary into the Soviet Union by reason of that country's increased output of the sugar beet crop this year.

Then again, it is a great opportunity for the farmers to do their best by providing work for men, as it requires one man to take care of every 10 acres, which would mean that if we produced at home, one quarter of the sugar imported in 1922, the employment of something like 40,000 men on the land, at wages amounting to one and a half million sterling.

From the farmer's point of view, he will be paid on a three-year contract, as high as 54 shillings for every ton of raw beet, which increases according to the extra amount of sugar obtained, from every ton of the raw material, above fifteen-and-a-half percent.

Sugar Beet is also a valuable cleaning crop, and increases the yield of all other crops with which it is grown in rotation, anywhere from 10 to 15 percent. Then again, it has been found that the by-product of a factory provides cattle food equal, if not greatly superior, to mangold and swedes, thereby increasing the yield of both milk and meat. I might add, that the seed will be provided and sold by the factory to the grower at cost price.

I therefore make an appeal to every farmer, to study the question at once, so that he may prepare himself to enter into a contract with the Yeovil Beet Sugar Factory.

I strongly supported the subsidy in Parliament because I believe that the cultivation of the sugar beet at home will be a splendid thing for our farmers, will be a means of providing work for our people, and at the same time we shall be producing one of the most important articles of food which up to now has been imported from abroad

Walter Shaw, Member of Parliament, Rood Ashton,

October the 5th, 1925.

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Cement and Sugar Workers.

Ely beet sugar workers asked to join union.

The Shepreth strike.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 16th, 1925.

A public meeting, attended by many citizens and workers at the Beet Sugar Factory, was held on the Market-square, Ely, on Sunday evening, when pointed references were made to the Shepreth strike, and wages and conditions of employees in the beet sugar industry. The gathering was organised in conjunction with the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. Mr. G A Yearsley, of Barrow-in-Furness, presided, and the speakers were Messrs. E V Watering, (East Anglian Organiser for the Union), and A H Keeley, (Norwich).

Among those present were, Mr. E R Blount, (commercial manager of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory), and Mr. G E Fowler, (water transport manager), who each spoke in reference to the Ely Factory.

The Chairman explained that the promoters of the meeting, were out to organise the workers of Ely. The speakers would explain the necessity of their being organised, and thus gain a fair standard of living for themselves, their wives and children. In welcoming the speakers, the Chairman said they must give Mr. Watering all credit for the way in which he was conducting the dispute at Shepreth for the cement workers, and keeping the latter together, marching to a sure and certain victory.

The Shepreth strike.

Mr Watering said that during the last few days he had been spending time in Ely, and getting in touch with the workers at the Beet Sugar Factory, urging them to become members of his union, which was formed 38 years ago. The union had a membership of nearly 500,000. Ely was part of the London district. Mr. Keeley had been dealing with the wages of the workers at Cantley Sugar Factory, where practically all the employees belonged to the union. They were endeavouring to organise the workers at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and turn them into a set of sound, thinking men, combined with one great object, which could only be reached by their being in one great voice. If they had 200 men and 200 voices for better conditions, it was easy for the employer to turn down their demands, but if they were part of one great body, there was nothing that was fair that they could not obtain.

The agricultural workers were a great body of persons, engaged in the cultivation and production of food, and yet they were the first people to starve, because of the damnable wage they were getting in Cambridgeshire. It was not the fault of the farmers, –he did not criticise them, –but of the farm workers. (Hear, hear). If they were members of a trade union, they would be able to get a good living wage. When they got 46 shillings per week, –a meagre wage, –how many of them, when the farmer came round and said, “What are you paying in that union for, John? You are only keeping those agitators,” left in their union? The farmer did not tell them that it was the force behind a Bill of Parliament that got them their 46 shillings. As fast as they dropped out of the Union their wages came down, and now in Ely, they were a disgrace to the city.

In mentioning the city, he would like to mention the Bishop of Ely. Usually, he had not much to say for parsons, but the Bishop of Ely kindly offered the loan of his palace for the Great Shepreth dispute. The Cambridge newspapers, being circulated in Ely, they must have read of the strike, which had been going on now for seven months. At Shepreth, in 1919 and 1920, the men employed at the East Anglian Cement Works were trade unionists. In 1921, owing to a depression in trade, they dropped out, and when the wheel of industry began to turn again, the employers, instead of paying them the wage determined by the Joint Council for the Cement Industry, paid them lower. After taking all things into consideration, the Council decided that the wage should be, 11and three-quarter pence per hour. The “boys” at the East Anglian Cement Company got 8 and a half pence per hour, and for nine months tried to get their pay rectified, pointing the matter out to the management and the general manager, (Colonel, Louis Tebbutt). He, (the speaker), interviewed the Colonel, –they knew what colonels were, –who spoke of Germany, China, India and other things, but when he, (the speaker) said, “What about Shepreth?”, he said, “Keep off the grass; you're trespassing”. The Shepreth boys were not going to work for 8 and a half pence per hour, and, failing after nine months negotiation with the general manager, they came out on strike in March, and since then had kept out. The minimum pay for the cement workers was now 1 shilling and a farthing per hour, and the general manager now offered ten pence and a farthing.

They, (his hearers), perhaps knew the lot of the cement worker. He got so much cement into his chest and other parts of his body, that, after a few weeks, he was damned for life. If they could see the men come out of the cement works, they would notice that almost all of them were physical wrecks. Since the strike, ministers and other people in Cambridge had signed a petition, appealing to the Minister of Labour to inquire into the dispute. He had no hopes for the Minister of Labour, –he was as hard as stone. The Tory government was soulless too, and had no heart. When the petition was sent, it got turned down. The Bishop of Ely offered the loan of his Palace for a conference on the question, –(applause), and he, (Mr Watering), on behalf of the men, accepted it, but Colonel Tebbutt, on behalf of the Company, refused it. A few weeks ago, ten of the men went to see the Colonel, feeling it would be alright. The Reverend, Dr. Bouquet, one of the finest men in Cambridge, headed the deputation, and was accompanied by Pastor Darlow, a Congregational minister, who was giving £2 per week out of his own pocket to the men's relief fund. When they got to the General Manager's office, Doctor Bouquet, Pastor Darlow, and Mr. Robinson put forward the men's case, and after that one of the men began to talk, stating that he had been receiving 8 and a half pence per hour, and before that, 7 and a half pence. He told the manager that all they wanted was a living wage.

Colonel Tebbutt said, “A living wage”, and then went on to state he had been in China and they, (the cement workers,) were getting thirteen times as much as some workers out there. He further said “Starvation is the incentive to work.” On being reminded that he was a member of a Christian Church, he said what they were dealing with was business, and that he bought in the cheapest market and sold in the dearest. The Shepreth workers had been out for 31 weeks, the speaker went on, and the strike pay had been 16 shillings per week in their union. Some of the men were married with five or six children. He appealed for liberal support of a collection which would be taken on behalf of the wives and children of the men. Every penny would go to them.

Appeal to the sugar workers.

Addressing The beet sugar factory workers in the crowd, Mr Watering remarked that if they wanted anything done, they would have to do it themselves. Therefore, they should join the

National Union of General and Municipal Workers, and through that machinery establish the conditions of life they had the right to expect.

Mr Keeley, speaking particularly to the Beet Sugar Factory workers, said that when the Labour Party came into office, it came to the conclusion, that there was a great future for sugar beet growing, and thought that by subsidising it by national funds, they would help the agricultural areas. Since the Labour Party pledged to subsidise the manufacture of beet sugar, factories had been erected, including one at Ely. He had dealt with the workers at Cantley and got them 1 shilling and four pence per hour in 1920, and the two twelve-hour's shifts per day turned into three eight-hour periods, with one and a half times the rate of pay for Sundays and double for Christmas Day. The workers joined up almost to a man, and were pleased with the results attained. The beet sugar employees worked at the factories for about four months per year, and for the rest of the time were scattered, and thought that it was difficult to keep them together in the Union. They still held their rates and conditions in 1921, but in 1922 there was a slump, and they could not get the men to join, with the result that their wages were reduced from 1 shilling and 4 pence to 10 pence per hour, which meant a loss of 24 shillings, per week, through their not paying a weekly contribution of sixpence. They wanted to organise in Ely, so that the union could say they represented the workers, and that the conditions at Cantley must apply to Ely. Continuing, Mr. Keeley said he understood they were trying to get workers to sign on for 10 pence per hour at the Ely factory. If they had got them inside the factory, let them come into the union, and the latter would say what rate of pay they should have.

A voice; Where is the bonus coming in? The speaker urged that the bonus was not a satisfactory basis. The man who worked in the abominable part of a sugar factory where all the heat was, received the same bonus as the floor sweeper. The men would say it was not fair. They must get it universal or there would be complaints. The Cantley workers said. "Give us a wage and we shall know what we get at the end of the week." When they had a definite wage, they could regulate their living accordingly.

One of the managers of the Ely factory here, asked if the speaker would allow him to make a statement in regard to the wages at the Ely factory.

Mr. Keeley raised no objection, subject to right of reply.

The manager explained that the rate of pay, on, and after Tuesday next, until a decision of the Arbitration Court was given, would be 10 pence per hour for an eight hours' day for a six days' a week, with one and a quarter rate for the first two hours' overtime, and a one and a half rate for the next two hours, with one and a half times pay for Sundays. Craftsman would be paid at the local rate. Mr. Keeley then spoke on the subject of the twelve hours' shift in the Sugar Factory, maintaining that for certain work it was beyond human strength. At Cantley, the two twelve hours' shifts had been abolished, and the three eight-hour shifts instituted. When they put the question before the director's, they could see the reason. He hoped they at Ely were not going to agree to the 12 hours' shift. It seemed that the conditions at Ely were the same as at Cantley. If that were so, they were going to the Industrial Court to ask the same rate of pay as Cantley.

Mr. E R Blount, (commercial manager of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory), said a notice had been posted up that the Ely factory would accept the decision of the Court, whatever it was. In further remarks, Mr. Keeley urged Ely Sugar Factory workers to keep in their union in order to ensure a fair wage inside the factory. He appealed to them to keep their working all square. He should remember the pledge he had been given in regard to the award of the Industrial Arbitration Court, and would inform the latter that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory would accept its decision.

“Be honest.”

At the invitation of Mr Keeley, Mr Fowler rose and addressed the crowd. On behalf of the management, he wished to say they were out to give the workers a fair deal, and they wanted a fair return. They were giving them a start in a new industry and giving them an opportunity in Ely. “Treat us fairly and we will treat you fairly,” he said, amid applause. Trade unionism was a fine thing for the country, but it must not be abused. He did not like sympathetic strikes, when men came out distressed themselves and their homes, and ruined industry in which they were employed, when they were not affected. With trade unionists working honestly with their masters, industry would prosper. “Let us be honest,” he appealed. “I hope we shall work together and make Ely’s one of the finest factories in England and in the world.” (Loud applause.) A collection for the women and children of the men involved in the Shepreth strike realised. £3, 2 shillings and one penny.

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Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

Commences operations.

Opening by the Minister of Agriculture yesterday.

The Peterborough and Hunts Standard, Friday, October the 16th, 1925

Within twelve months of the commencement of building operations, the immense sugar beet factory at Ely has been completed; in fact, this week has seen the costly installation working at the conversion of beets into sparkling white sugar. The formal opening of the factory took place yesterday, under the most auspicious circumstances, and in the presence of a distinguished gathering, the ceremony being performed by the Minister of Agriculture, the Right Honourable, Edward F L Wood. A special train from London conveyed the Minister and guests to Ely

Sir James Martin, (chairman of directors), presided at the opening ceremony, and supporting him on the platform were: the Minister of Agriculture, Lord Bledisloe of Lydney: The Earl of Denbigh: Colonel, Sir George Courthorpe: Sir Frederick Hiam: Doctor A Wijnberg: Doctor J A. van Loon: Mr J P van Rossum: Mr Ward Jones: Mr R R Robbins, (president of the National Farmers Union), Mr A Wood, (secretary of the company). Among others attending or who accepted invitations were: Brigadier General R L Aldereron: Sir William Beach Thomas: Sir Leonard Brassey: Sir T W H Clarke: Honourable, Sir John Cockburn: Sir John T Davis: Viscount Fielding: Lord Fermoy, Member of Parliament: Sir Francis Floud: Sir Harry Foster: Sir John L Green: Sir A D Hall: Lord Illingworth: Lord Invernairn, of Strathnairn: Sir Ernest Jardine: Sir H Lucas-Tooth, Member of Parliament: Sir Herbert Matthews: Right Honourable George H Roberts: Sir Richard Winfrey: Sir Robert Rutherford: and others.

In opening the proceedings, the chairman observed that before the war there was only one factory operating, namely, that at Cantley. Since then, two other factories had been erected at Kelham and Colwick respectively, and the Ely factory was one of the six new factories which were promised in connection with the passing of the British Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925.

The British Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925, received the Royal Assent on the 27th of March last, but relying on the adoption by Parliament of the Policy towards the industry of successive Ministries, the company got to work twelve months ago, --over five months before the Bill

became an Act. Everyone in the industry was indebted to the Minister of Agriculture, and to his colleague Lord Bledisloe, for the manner in which they piloted the British Sugar (Subsidy) Bill through the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectively.

The Minister had to consider many interests: agricultural and industrial, commercial and financial, and above all, the interests of the public, both as taxpayers and consumers. Speaking in the presence of Members of Parliament, representing all shades of political thought, he was sure they would agree that the Minister fulfilled his many-sided responsibilities to the satisfaction of everyone concerned.

The factory described.

The chairman continued to describe the new factory and said it was built on the banks of the River Ouse and it was one and a half miles from Ely station, at the junction of a number of railway lines. The total area of the site comprised 66 acres.

Four miles of railway sidings had been installed to deal with the beet traffic, and silos covering an area of 50,000 square feet had been constructed for the receipt of beets, which arrived by rail, road and by water.

For the reception of the water-borne beet, and for other purposes, a wharf had been constructed 650 feet in length, with a depth of water sufficient to accommodate the largest barges which could be used on the river. They had their own fleet of fifty barges, and claimed that one of their services to the community was an organised attempt to restore the use of some of the waterways with which the county abounds. (Applause).

The capacity of the factory is 1,200 to 1,500 tons, and to run a full campaign they could deal with 120,000 to 150,000 tons of beet. They did not expect to reach that capacity for the first season, but they had the satisfactory number of 1,179 growers, practically all of whom were within twenty miles of the factory. The output of sugar ready to be placed on the market when the full capacity of the factory was reached should not be less than 15,000 to 20,000 tons. During the factory campaign now commencing, they would employ about 500 men.

They could see for themselves that day, what could be done for industry by cooperation between all the interests concerned. Everyone had worked with a will. There had been no disputes or labour troubles worth talking about, and there had been complete cooperation between Dutch and British engineers and architects.

Farmers around had responded to the call, although they wanted the farmers to grow more and more beet.

The Government had fulfilled its parts of the bargain, and it was hoped that the Minister of Agriculture would give such a send-off that they would be able at the end of the first season, to give a good report in regard to this addition to the production at home of a further instalment of the nation's food supply. Instead of having to send money abroad in order to bring it in. (Hear, hear, and applause).

In conclusion, the Chairman mentioned the valuable services which had been rendered in connection with the building of the factory by Messrs. Hal Williams and Co., the factory architects, and by the able and indefatigable factory manager, Mr Willemstyn, whose personality was a source of inspiration to all concerned. To him and to Mr Blount, the commercial manager, and to all engaged, they gave most cordial thanks. (Applause.)

A wonderful creation.

The Minister of Agriculture was very heartily received, and at the outset took the opportunity of congratulating those responsible for the factory, which he described as a “wonderful creation in the short space of twelve months.” Referring to the sugar beet industry, he said it was with the passing of the subsidy that they were able to assure themselves of a real prospect of the security and success of the industry. The result of the efforts of the last Government, succeeded by the efforts of the present Government, had resulted in very definite progress being made in the whole national undertaking. (Applause).

Continuing, the Minister said that when he laid proposals before the House of Commons last autumn, he told the House that eight new factories were in contemplation, of which it was hoped six would be ready for work this autumn.

That estimate was thought a sanguine one, but the results were better than their hopes, and they now saw no less than seven new factories opening this season. In 1925 there was an acreage in sugar beet of 55,000 acres, and it was estimated that the acreage for next year would be something over 100,000 acres. (Applause).

Referring to subsidies, the speaker said he was not a warm believer in subsidies in general. He had always felt that a subsidy to be justified, must be justified on exceptional grounds, and must be able to show a reasonable certainty that it would effect its purpose. He desired to emphasise the fact that in this connection the state had a complete certainty that it got the equivalent value in production for every £1 of subsidy it was called upon to pay. He was confident that such action and policy of a subsidy scheme for the sugar beet industry was justifiable.

The experience of all countries had gone to show that for the establishment of this industry, some measure of material assistance was necessary. He felt sure that in 10 years’ time they would see great results from this assistance by the firm establishment of the industry.

He was told that in the eastern counties, beet had in many cases proved the most profitable feature on the farm, and he had heard of one cultivator who was getting something like 13 tons of beet to the acre from moderate fen land.

Feeding ourselves.

The speaker felt sure that there was no one who did not welcome the opportunity of producing an increased proportion of a foodstuff that was essential to every household in the land, for which we had hitherto to rely upon foreign importation. (Hear, hear).

They should use every endeavour to secure and maintain the beet industry, for he believed it was a “winner” in agriculture. He hoped both factories and growers would regard the subsidy period, not as a period made tolerably comfortable by the State support, but as a period of unremitting effort to prepare for the period of foreign competition which was bound to follow.

In conclusion, the minister uttered a word of warning. Whilst he desired to encourage them in every effort to develop the industry during the subsidy period, he would appeal to them to proceed with caution in the choice of factory sites. They must do their utmost to avoid overlapping, for it would prove ruinous to the manufacturer and producer. (Applause).
Hearty votes of thanks to the Minister, and to the directors of the factory for their hospitality, brought the proceedings to a close, and afterwards the factory was inspected by the guests.

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# Ely Sugar Factory.

## Opening yesterday by the Minister of Agriculture.

## State subsidy justified.

## “A Winner” for the Industry and Productivity.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 16th, 1925.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory was officially opened by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, (the Right Honourable, Edward, F L Wood, Member of Parliament,) in the presence of a large number of distinguished visitors yesterday, (Thursday) afternoon. It is now about a year ago since activities in connection with the erection of the factory commenced. Gradually, large tracks of arable and pasture land have disappeared beneath the industry of the contractors, and today, there are well over two acres of buildings on a site of 66 acres. A description of the factory which was given by the Chairman in his opening remarks has already appeared in this Journal.

Many of yesterday's visitors travelled by special train from Kings Cross, and they, and the Minister of Agriculture, were met at Ely Station by members of the Ely Urban Council. Among the Councillors present were Messrs. W Theobald, (Chairman), E S Harvey, J C Laxton, T W H Clarke, W Burrows, W A Stonebridge, Leslie Daniels, E Bedford, Lieutenant Colonel, G L Archer, and Mrs. G B Davis. Major Gordon Fowler, the water transport manager, was present on behalf of the manager, (Mr. Willemstyn).

A fleet of motor buses conveyed the visitors from the station to the factory. The opening ceremony took place in the Sugar Store.

The chairman of the Directors, (Sir James Martin) presided, and he was supported by Sir Frederick Hiam, Colonel Sir G L Courthorpe, (MC), Recipient of the Military Cross, (MP), Member of Parliament, The Right Honourable G H Roberts, Mr. Warde Jones, Mr. J P van Rossum, Dr. A Wijnberg, and Dr. J A van Loon, (directors), the Minister of Agriculture, the Earl of Denbigh, Lord Bledisloe, Mr. Robbins and Mr. Langford, (President and Vice President of the National Farmers Union), and Mr. Alfred Wood, (secretary).

### The Guests.

Those who accepted invitations to be present included: --

Brigadier General R L Aldercron, (CMG), Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, (DSO), Distinguished Service Order, Messrs. J A Aiton: Cole Ambrose, Arthur Amos, W A Appleton, G L Archer, Cyril Atkinson, (KC), King’s Council, (MP), Member of Parliament, W J Atkinson, C R Atlee, (MP), Member of Parliament.

Messrs. E C Barnes, C W Barrett, T Baxter, Sir William Beach-Thomas, (KBE), Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Messrs. G E Bedford, J R Bennett, J E Bidwell, Sir Roland Biffen, (FRS), Fellow of the Royal Society, Mr. R Bilsland, Lord Bledisloe of Lydney, (KBE), Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Sir Stanley Bois, Mr. H Boon, Mr. H A Bovell, Sir Leonard Brassey, (Bt), Baronet, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs. A J Brickwell, C Brinton, H Dent Brocklehurst, G Turville Brown, T H Brown, J G Buchanan, A F Buck, J F Burrows, Colonel H W Burton, (MP), Member of Parliament, Major Gerard Buxton.

Messrs. T B Callard, A R Campbell, E Cant, S P Cherrington, T W H Clarke, Sir W H Clarke, the Honourable Sir John Cockburn, (KCMG), Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Messrs. S Collen, J. E Corby, Colonel Sir G. L Courthorpe, (Bt), Baronet, (MC), Recipient of the Military Cross, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs. F S Courtney, S E Covill, D Crawford, V G Crittall, C E Cross, S Cross.

Messrs. L V Daniels, P L Daniels, G Darby, J B Darby, Sir John T Davis, (KCB), Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, Mrs G B Davis, Messrs. G H Davis, T W Day, A W Dean, (MP), Member of Parliament, Sir Stephen Demetriadi, (KBE), Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, the Earl of Denbigh, (CVO), Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Messrs. T J Dove, Arthur Drake, Reverend Herbert Dunnico, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs. M J R Dunstan, R B Dunwoody, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Mr. J. Falconer, (MBE), Member of the Order of the British Empire, Viscount Fielding, (CMG), Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, (DSO), Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, Mr. J. M. Fells, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Lord Fermoy, (MP), Member of Parliament, Lord Ffrench, Mr. Harry Fiden, Mr. H. Fiske, Sir Francis Floud, (KCB), Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, Sir Harry Foster, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs. R H Franklin, R French, J T Furness.

Mr. A Galloway, Mr. Henry Gardner, Lieutenant Colonel F Garrett, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Messrs. J Garton, B I Gates, C S Gibson, F Giddens, A Giles, A E Gillies, E H Gilpin, J H Gorvin, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire, V G Grane, J W Grace, F S Graff, (OBE), Officer of the Order of the British Empire, J Crosland Graham, A Graham-Smith, Sir John L Green, Messrs. A R Grieve, L Haden Guest, (MC), Recipient of the Military Cross, (MP), Member of Parliament, J B Guild, (MBE), Member of the Order of the British Empire

Sir A D Hall, (KCB), Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, (LLD), Doctor of Law, (FRS), Fellow of the Royal Society, Mr. C A Harney, (MP), Member of Parliament, Mr. A Harrison, Major W R Hartcup, Mr. E S Harvey, Mr. E L Hawkins, Sir S H H Henn, (KBE), Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, (MP), Member of Parliament, Sir Frederick Hiam, Messrs. R S Hicks, C T Houghton, Bulmer Howell, Percy Hurd, (MP), Member of Parliament.

Lord Illinworth, Lord Invernairn, of Strathnairn.

Sir Ernest Jardine, (Bt), Baronet, Mr. W Johnson, Mr. T Keens, Sir Stephen Killik, Mr. D W King, Mr. A R King-Farlow, the Reverend T J Kirkland.

Messrs. J.Q. Lamb, (MP), Member of Parliament, James E Lambe, A McA Lang, E W Langford, R S Langford, W Laver, J C Laxton, E A Layton, Percy A Leggeri, A de V Leigh, (MBE), Member of the Order of the British Empire, R M Leonard, Colonel B C Lockhart-Jervis, Sir H Lucas-Tooth, (Bt), Baronet, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs, J H L Luddington, J L Luddington, C. Lyle.

Messrs. C J B Macdonald, J G Mackenzie, F A Macquisten, (KC), Kings Council, (MP), Member of Parliament, W E. Mann, Sir E Manville, Messrs. H G Martin, H J Martin, J H Martin, Sir James Martin, Mr. E Mason, Mr. Japh Mason, Master of Elibank, Sir Herbert Mathews, Messrs. C Riley Maynard, J E Maynard, J McBride, R J Meller, (MP), Member of Parliament, T Tyson Middleton, (FLS), Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, G P Milne, B T Mitcham, W Foot Mitchell, (MP), Member of Parliament, S Moore, S Moore junior, W Foster Moore, Ben H Morgan, C J Morris, J Myatt. Mr. H J Norton.

Messrs. H H Parker, F W Parsons, Wyatt Paul, T Peake, F Pearson, S Pearson, T Pearson, the Honourable G Laurie Pile, M G Stanhope Pitt, Mr. H T Pooley. Mr. A J Queen.

Messrs. A T Radcliffe, F S Rainer, Edmund Read, Sir F G Rice, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs. J K Richardson, S Richardson, A Rickwood, C Rickwood, the Right Honourable, George H Roberts, (PC), Privy Counsellor, Mr. Rowland R Robbins, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Captain W. Robson, Messrs. A G Shirling Rooke, E Mortimer Rose, C Rottboll, F W Ruston, Sir Robert Rutherford.

Major Isidore Salmon, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire, (DL), Deputy lieutenant, (MP) Member of Parliament, Sir F Sanderson, (Bt), Baronet, (MP), Member of Parliament), Captain Scofield, Messrs. H Scholey, (CBE), Commander of the Order of the British Empire, G E Sealy, D M Semple, J E Shaw, Captain W Shaw, (MP), Member of Parliament), Messrs. E W Shepperson, (MP), Member of Parliament, H J Skelton, G H Smalley junior, C C Smith, N W Smith-Carrington, (MP), Member of Parliament, P H D Stockdale, W E Stockdale, H Stokes-Waite, G D Stone, W A Stonebridge, A W Street, (CIE), Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, (MC), Recipient of the Military Cross, the Honourable E C Strutt, (CH), Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour, Mr. H L Symonds.

Messrs. J B. Talbot-Crosbie, W Theobald, Albert E Thompson, F S Thompson, R J Thompson, (CB), Companion of the Order of the Bath, (OBE), Officer of the Order of the British Empire, C W Tindall, D B Toye, (OBE), Officer of the Order of the British Empire, E B Tredwin, E Turner.

Messrs. K G R Vaizey, D E Vandepeer, Dr. J A van Loon, Mr. J P van Rossum.

Mr. R K Walker, Sir J Walker-Smith, Mr. W A Ward-Jones, Brigadier General W W Warner, (CMG), Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, (MP), Member of Parliament, Mr M J Wyatt, Mr. C Dampier, Whetham, (FRS), Fellow of the Royal Society, Doctor A Wijnberg, Mr. E Wilkins, Mr. Hal Williams, Captain R G M Wilson, Lieutenant Colonel L F Winby, (MP), Member of Parliament, Sir Richard Winfrey, Sir Frederick Wise, (MP), Member of Parliament, Mr. Alfred Wood, the Right Honourable E F L Wood, (MP), Member of Parliament, Messrs. Thomas Wood, G R Woodward, J H Worters, J F Wright.

Chairmans welcome.

In his opening speech, the Chairman said that on behalf of the Directors of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited, he desired to offer them a cordial welcome, and he was sure that everyone would join with him in offering a special welcome to the Minister of Agriculture, (the Right Honourable Edward F.L. Wood), who had so kindly come down to declare the factory open. He need hardly remind them that the beet sugar industry in this country was of recent establishment, and that before the war there was only one factory operating, namely, at Cantley. Since then, two other factories had been erected, at Kelham and Colwick respectively, and that (the Ely) factory was one of the six new factories which were promised in connection with the passing of the British Sugar (Subsidy), Act, 1925, The Anglo Dutch group of which they formed a part, taking upon itself the responsibility for the erection of three factories out of the six. They were proud of the fact, that that day they were attending the inauguration of the first of these new factories. (Applause).

The British Sugar (Subsidy), Act, 1925, received the Royal assent on March 27th last, but relying on the adoption by Parliament of the policy towards the industry of successive ministries, they got to work 12 months ago, that was, over five months before the Bill became an Act. Everyone in the industry was indebted to the Minister of Agriculture and to his colleague Lord Bledisloe, for the manner in which they piloted that Bill through the House of Commons and House of Lords respectively. The Minister had to consider many interests, agricultural and

industrial, commercial and financial, and above all, the interests of the public, both as taxpayers and consumers. Speaking in the presence of Members of Parliament, representing all shades of political thought, he was sure they would agree that the Minister fulfilled his many-sided responsibilities to the satisfaction of everyone concerned.

The Chairman went on to describe the factory in detail, stating that the total area of the factory site was 66 acres and they had four methods of getting the beet to the factory, rail, motor traction, horse traction and carriage by water. The area covered by the factory buildings was two and one quarter acres.

Output and capacity.

“The capacity of the factory,” the Chairman continued, “is 1,200 to 1,500 tons, and to run a full campaign we can deal with 120,000 to 150,000 tons of beet. We do not expect to reach that capacity for the first season, but we have the satisfactory number of 1,179 growers, practically all of whom are within 20 miles of the factory. The output of sugar ready to be placed on the market when the full capacity of the factory is reached should not be less than from 15,000 to 20,000 tons.”

Commenting on the relation of industry to employment, he said that during the building of the factory, the average number of men employed in building operations, and the erection of machinery had been nearly 1,000, and their wages bill on the site, apart from wages in engineering shops, had amounted to £100,000. Although under the arrangement with the Government, which was made previous to the passing of the Act, a good deal of the machinery in the factory was of Dutch origin, the number of British firms who had supplied machinery, apart from building material, was not less than 77. During the factory campaign now commencing, they would employ about 500 men.

The Board of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited, was composed of six directors, three of whom were Dutch, Mr. J P van Rossum, Doctor A Wijnberg, and Doctor J A van Loon, and three of whom are English, Colonel Sir George L Courthope, (Bt), Baronet, (MP), Member of Parliament, Sir Frederick Hiam, and myself. They had also associated with them, as alternate directors to two of their Dutch friends, the Right Honourable, George H Roberts, and Mr. W A Ward-Jones. The secretary was Mr. Alfred Wood, (FCA), Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, who has made the beet sugar industry the objective of his professional career. They were delighted to be associated with their Dutch friends in this Ely enterprise, which owed everything to the initiative, energy, technical ability and financial resources of Mr. van Rossum and his two able coadjutors. (Applause.)

Dutch and English.

He had heard now and again, some mumblings in regards to Dutch influence in this industry. Let him analyse the position. Mr. van Rossum and his friends, had come with their great technical skill and had shown their faith in the British Government, in British architects and builders, in British labour and British farmers, by finding practically the whole of the capital for this factory, and by giving them that technical skill and direction without which a new industry for this country could not have a reasonable prospect of success. (Hear, hear.) “Our Dutch friends entertain a better view of us than we appear to have of ourselves” he continued. “If I construe aright the representation which is presented to the world by our pessimists, a large part of the nation appears to be playing, while another equally important part seems to be loafing. This is not the view our Dutch friends entertain of us, and it is not the proper view. We have asked you to come here today, in order to see what can be done for industry, by cooperation between all the interest concerned. Everyone has worked with a will. We have had no disputes or labour troubles worth talking about, and there has been complete

cooperation between Dutch and English engineers and architects. Farmers around us have responded to our call, although we want them to grow more and more beet.

--(A voice: We are going to.)—"The Government has fulfilled it's part of the bargain, and we hope that the Minister of Agriculture will give us such a sendoff, that we will be able, at the end of our first season, to give a good report in regard to this addition in the production at home, of a further instalment of the nation's food supply, instead of having to send our money abroad in order to bring it in". (Applause.)

In conclusion, he mentioned the valuable services which had been rendered in connection with the building of the factory by Messrs. Hal Williams and Company, the architects, and by our able and indefatigable factory manager, Mr. Willemstyn, whose personality was a source of inspiration to all concerned. To him, to Mr. Blount, (the commercial manager), and to all engaged, they gave most cordial thanks. (Applause.)

Minister and the new industry.

The Minister of Agriculture expressed pleasure at being invited to perform the opening ceremony, and congratulated those responsible for the wonderful creation which had taken place in the short space of 12 months. They might, he continued, claim to be a representative gathering. They had representatives of the various manufacturing groups concerned with the beet sugar business, representatives of those who grew beet, representatives of the National Farmers Union, and representatives of Ely and Cambridge public bodies. The Chairman had reminded them of the past history of events in that field. They had been through various stages. In the first stage they saw great hopes aroused, but they saw disappointment, following rather quickly upon the heels of hope, and it was not until they reached the second phase in the passage of the Subsidy Act that they were able to assure themselves of real prospects of the secure and successful establishment of the new industry. He would like to add to his testimony of gratitude to that offered by the Chairman on the work in that direction by his predecessor, (Mr. Noel Buxton), --whose restoration to health they hoped soon to be able to congratulate him upon, –and also to acknowledge the work of the Government, of which he, (Mr. Buxton), was a member. (Applause). As the results of the efforts of that Government, succeeded by those of his, (the speaker's) own, they were in a position to-day to report very definite progress of the whole national undertaking.

When he laid the proposals before the House of Commons last December, he told the House that eight new factories were in contemplation, of which it was hoped six would be ready for working this autumn. At the time, that estimate was thought sanguine, but events had been better than their hopes, and they saw that no less than seven new factories were opening this season. It was because Ely was the first of those factories to open that it afforded him special pleasure to take his part in it. At least six more factories were in contemplation for next year. That was a very satisfactory beginning. In 1925 they had an acreage under sugar beet of 55,000 acres. They had estimated that the acreage for next year would be something over 100,000 acres. (Applause.)

"Dreams and subsidies."

That had been achieved by direct state help on not in ungenerous terms, acting in cooperation, –and he wished to emphasise that point, –with the men who for years had been dreaming dreams, and who were endowed with the faith that could translate those dreams into practical action. He must confess that he was not a warm believer in subsidies in general. He always felt that for a subsidy to be justified, there must be exceptional grounds, and must be able to show a reasonable certainty that it would be of benefit. He would like to emphasise that in this case the State had a complete certainty that it would get equivalent value in production for

every pound of subsidy it was called upon to pay. In addition to that, there were two particular reasons, by which he thought they might firmly assert that such action and such a policy was justifiable.

First of all, let him remind them that experience of all countries, had gone to show that for the establishment of this industry, some measure of early assistance was necessary, and he was confident that in ten years' time they would see the result, in the secure establishment of it. The second reason was this: the need and value of new crops, and maybe new methods, in British agriculture. In the Eastern Counties, inquiries showed that beet was in many cases the most profitable feature on the farm. That was a big contribution to the arable question, and he did not think it was extravagant to hope that in a good many cases on lighter soils, where corn growing to-day was unprofitable, farmers would find a substitute in growing beet. Then, on other lands, beet by its residual value, would help to stimulate the production of wheat. This movement was of value to the cause of agriculture, to employment, and to agricultural welfare, and one, incidentally, which would assist the smaller holder and farmer, no less than the large farmer.

Another great point was, that it would lead to the reduction of food imports, and he thought that anybody who reflected upon that, would welcome the opportunity of producing an increasing proportion of foodstuff, that was essential to every household in the land, for which hitherto, they had to rely entirely on foreign importation.

"Shortsighted and unjust."

"I also have heard these grumblings," Mr. Wood continued, "about foreign money and foreign capital. I think that to despise or resent foreign help and foreign capital, is short sighted and unjust. I come from a county, Yorkshire, which is supposed to be tight-fisted. If anybody came to me for improving my estate, I would not mind where the money came from, especially if I saw advantages accruing to me. It is the same here, and I think when the industry is established, we shall look back to the part taken by foreigners in its initiation". He urged that they should make every effort to secure and maintain the cooperation of all interests. He believed that this was a winner in agriculture and in the business of national productivity. Mr Wood recalled the difference of opinion, which originally existed between those promoting this movement and those interested in sugar refinery, and he said he would like to express his appreciation of the sportsmanlike action of the refiners since the Act was passed. They had not retracted from their previous claim, but they had taken up the new industry, and were devoting money and practical experience to it. The new factories at Bury Saint Edmunds and Greenock, were a tribute to the business acumen of that portion of the community.

Mr Wood also referred to the excellent relations prevailing between the factories and the growers. He hoped that both factories and growers would regard the subsidy period not as a period of existence may tolerably comfortable by the dole of State support, but as a period of stern and unremitting preparation for the stern period which was to follow. Factories and growers were essential to one another. The growers were the lynchpin of the whole chain, and industry could only go as far as growers would produce the beet on which the factory and industry depended. There was not much risk about it, but he heard of some growers who are hesitating. He hoped that the opening of Ely and other factories would create such a wave of enthusiasm that farmers great and small, wherever beet growing was possible, would endeavour to have a share and make the whole venture a thorough and complete success. He was aware that in some cases there had been, and perhaps there would be again, labour difficulties, but he was satisfied that by thorough organisation these could be overcome. He hoped there would be no hesitancy on that ground. The present three years contracts, he

thought, were favourable to the growers, and the National Farmers Union, –which he knew to his cost, –was a strong organisation, would look after their interests.

Warning and encouragement.

While he would encourage every effort necessary to develop the business during the subsidy period, he thought a word of warning was worthwhile, with regard to the necessity of proceeding with caution in the choice of factory sites. They must do their utmost to avoid overlapping.

He would conclude with a note of encouragement. He was told that the estimated European beet crop this year was very little over that of 1924-25, and it was also estimated that there was no great increase in the produce of the Cuban crop. There was no denying the fact that the world consumption of sugar was increasing, so that, from the point of view of world competition, prospects were favourable. He hoped that all sections of the community would do everything they could to promote the prosperity of the new industry, which in its turn might bring great help to trade, and bring great help and restore new hope to British agriculture. In formally declaring the factory open, he wished it, and all it stood for, every success. (Applause).

Votes of thanks.

Colonel Courthope, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Minister of Agriculture, said that through his efforts, they had constructed an edifice to that industry, the foundation of which was laid by his predecessor, (Mr. Buxton). The establishment of that new industry in England had been worked for, slaved for, and toiled for, by a number of people, but none had worked more strenuously than Lord Denbigh. The speaker also paid a warm tribute to Mr. van Rossum, without whose enterprise all their efforts would have fallen to the ground, he said.

Sir Fred Hiam, in seconding, said that sugar beet could be grown successfully on all light soils, especially if growers paid particular attention to singling, etc. They read about the decline of English farming, and he agreed with regard to wheat. English wheat was the one crop which they had to sell at less money than their competitors. Still, to-day they fed fifty million with potatoes, vegetables and milk. There was now double the stuff grown in this locality than there was fifty years ago. Sugar beet would employ seven times more labour per acre than wheat growing.

The vote was accorded with acclamation, and Mr. Wood briefly acknowledged.

Lord Bledisloe, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Director's for their hospitality, said that, that day's programme had been a masterpiece of organisation and princely hospitality. To those who look for rural regeneration in this country, that was a red-letter day, and they thanked them, not only for their hospitality, but for conferring an immeasurable boon on the agricultural community of Great Britain. Mr. Robins seconded, and spoke of the courtesy which his organisation had received at the hands of the directors.

The Earl of Denbigh, in supporting, congratulated Mr. van Rossum on his pluck in investing money in this country, when the industry was less favourable in aspect than at present. As far as grumbling about foreign capital was concerned, he thought it was not only short sighted, but stupid. If foreigners would come forward and build factories, help our unemployment, and help agriculture, all he had to say was, “Let ‘em all come.” (Applause.)

The vote was carried with acclamation.

Mr. van Rossum, in replying, on behalf of the directors, said that the first season of the factory would be only a, “preliminary canter.”. They could not expect to get into their full stride until next season at the earliest. He and his Dutch colleagues appreciated the kind remarks that had been made. He thought that the reason that we had been encouraged to continue all possible help to that new industry, had been their confidence in the fairness and justice which characterised British Governments in their relations with other countries. They like to teach what they knew to England, because they had always believed that this country was a place in which a flourishing sugar beet industry should exist. This factory alone involved nearly £400,000 of capital, and a similar amount is involved in each of the Cantley and Ipswich factories, but they did not fear the future, even though the subsidy was gradually reduced, provided the farmers supplied them with the necessary quantity of raw material, and at the same time, gain increased experience as they gained theirs, in reducing production costs by an increased output. They had confidence in the farmers, not only because, though conservative, they are reasonable men, but also because they had confidence that the National Farmers Union leaders would take a broad view of the difficulties and risks of the other party to the beet contract. (Applause.)

The visitors subsequently made a tour of the factory; the process of manufacture being closely followed with keen interest.

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Sugar Beet.

New factory opened at Ely.

Subsidy “Baby.”

The Nottingham Journal, Friday, October the 16th, 1925.

The Minister of Agriculture, the Right Honourable E Wood, (MP), Member of Parliament, formally opened a new factory at Ely today, built and equipped, as a result of the passing of the British Sugar (Subsidies Act), in March of this year.

This is one of six factories to be built in response to the encouragement given by the Government, in the form of a subsidy decided upon, but left as a legacy, by the Labour Government.

Mr Wood admitted that he was not a warm believer in subsidies in general, and expressed the further opinion, that a subsidy to be justified, must be defended upon its exceptional grounds. In a reference to the subsidy to the sugar industry, he thought that the Government had the complete ground that is young, to secure an equivalent value for every pound it pays.

A Word of Warning.

Mr Wood spoke hopefully of the development of agriculture as a result of the stimulus provided by the subsidy, and looked to it as a means whereby more employment may be provided.

He gave a note of warning in concluding his speech, that the beet industry should be conducted upon such sound business principles, that in the period when the subsidy ceases,

the resources and the beet industry will be such that it will be able to stand unaided. Before the war, there was only one factory for the production of beet sugar, –at Cantley. Since then, two more factories have been erected, –one at Kelham and another at Colwick.

One of Six.

The new factory at Ely, is one of six promised in connection with the passing of the Subsidy Act. The Anglo-Dutch group undertook to build three of the six, and the Ely factory is the first of the three. It is built on the banks of the River Ouse, one and a half miles from Ely station, and at the junction of a number of railway lines.

The total area of the factory site is 66 acres. Four miles of railway sidings have been installed to deal with the beet traffic, and silos covering an area of 50,000 square feet have been constructed for the receipt of beets, which come in by rail, road and by water.

Sir James Martin, the chairman of the director's, giving details of the factory said: “We have our own fleet of 50 barges, and we claim that one of our services to the community is an organised attempt to restore the use of some of the waterways with which this country abounds. Thus, we have four methods of getting the beet to the factory, –rail, motor traction, horse traction and carriage by water. The area covered by the factory buildings is 2¼ acres”.

15,000 Tons of Sugar

Sir James added that the capacity of the factory is 1,200 tons. “To run a full campaign,” he said. “We can deal with 120,000 tons of beet. We do not expect to reach that capacity for the first season, but we have the satisfactory number of 1,179 growers, practically all of whom are within 20 miles of the factory.

“The output of sugar ready to be placed on the market when the full capacity of the factory is reached should not be less than 15,000 tons.”

Other speeches were made by Sir G L Courthope, (MP), Member of Parliament, Sir Frederick Hiam, Lord Bledisloe and the Earl of Denbigh. An inspection of the factory was afterwards made by the guests who attended the opening ceremony.

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Topics of the week.

Sugar beet developments.

The Diss Express, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Journal, Friday, October the 16th, 1925.

This week may rightly be described as an important one in the history of this industry. On Thursday, the Minister of Agriculture opened a new factory at Ely, which factory is the forerunner of several others, and the manufacturers of agricultural implements, have also, this week, been demonstrating a variety of new implements, especially designed to simplify the lifting of the crop, with a consequent decrease in harvesting costs. It is interesting to note in this connection, that a local firm had forestalled this national test by some weeks, a locally designed and manufactured, Beet Lifter, having already been successfully demonstrated in

this district. There is now little doubt, that beet sugar growing in this country has come to stay, and is rapidly increasing in popularity.

A wonderful increase.

Statistics are not, as a rule, very interesting reading, but those dealing with the increase in acreage of sugar beet are an exception to the general rule. In England and Wales in the year 1924, there were 22,400 acres devoted to this crop. This year, those figures have increased to 54,700. Truly remarkable figures, but their full value can only be properly appreciated by those who thoroughly understand and appreciate the traditional conservatism and caution of the British farmer, who is at all times rather loath to adopt a new crop, especially so, when, as in the case of sugar beet, it involves a considerable expenditure in labour and some substantial risk in production.

Still more acreage required.

Important as this increased acreage is, it is still very doubtful if there is enough land under the crop to keep the present factories fully employed, leaving out of consideration those building, and projected. For this year's crop, there will be no less than 10 factories anxious to absorb the products, these factories, being situated at Cantley, Kelham, Colwick, Ely, Ipswich, Kidderminster, Spalding, Bury Saint Edmunds, Wissington and Greenock. Local interest of late, has been centred on the proposed factory at Harleston, over which, unfortunately, there appears to have been some considerable misunderstanding, and we understand that its erection is jeopardised, if not entirely abandoned. However, a substitute has rapidly been found in the proposal to build at Halesworth. This proposal, strongly backed by Lord Huntingfield, Member of Parliament, is most promising.

The labour problem.

One of the greatest difficulties that faces the prospective sugar beet grower, is that of an adequate supply of labour, particularly for the harvesting. This labour should be ample in number, and more or less experienced, and not too expensive in costs, if the inevitable Continental competition is to be successfully faced, when the industry is compelled to stand on its own, without the advantages at present conferred by the Government subsidy.

It is in this connection, that the agricultural implement manufacturers have a very important part to play, in the designing of efficient labour-saving devices for the cultivation and harvesting of the crop. The National Farmers Union, through their Sugar Beet Committee, have given considerable attention to the man-power question and have already met with a considerable measure of success. The Government has also proved very sympathetic, and have stimulated the employment exchanges, to activity in dealing with this fundamental problem.

The value of sugar beet cultivation.

The measure of progress already made in establishing sugar beet growing is most encouraging, and it is worthy of all support, not only because its success would render us independent of supplies from outside sources, of a commodity in use in every household in the land, but also, –and perhaps even more important, –its general adoption by farmers, would almost transform the condition of things in country districts, and would not only benefit the farmer by introducing an arable crop, which promises good financial returns, but will also benefit the labourer, by increasing considerably the acreage of arable land in cultivation in this country.

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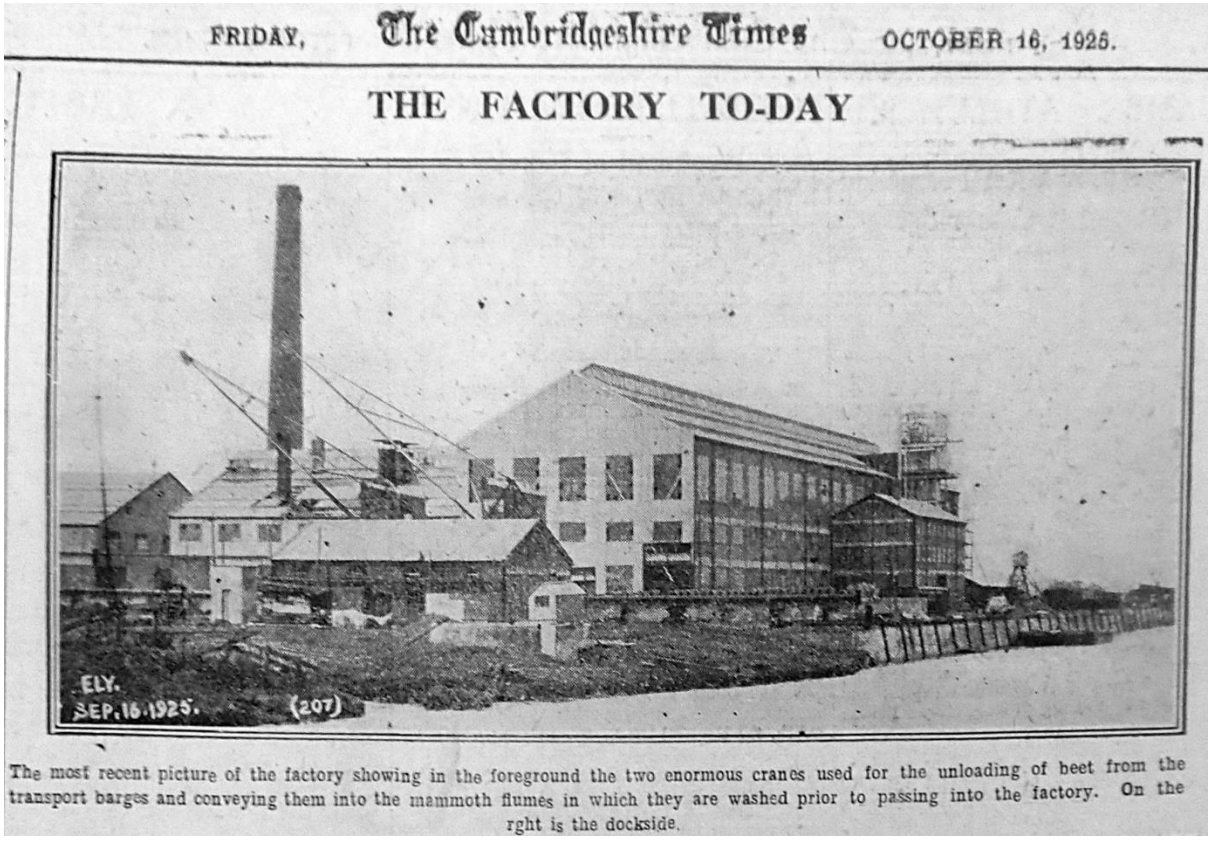
The Factory today.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, October the 16th, 1925.

Photograph below and caption.

Caption reads:

The most recent picture of the factory, showing in the foreground the two enormous cranes, used for the unloading of beet from the transport barges and conveying them into the mammoth flumes, in which they are washed, prior to passing into the factory. On the right is the dockside.



FRIDAY, The Cambridgeshire Times OCTOBER 16, 1925.

THE FACTORY TO-DAY

ELY. SEP. 16. 1925. (207)

The most recent picture of the factory showing in the foreground the two enormous cranes used for the unloading of beet from the transport barges and conveying them into the mammoth flumes in which they are washed prior to passing into the factory. On the rght is the dockside.

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Tory praise for Ex-Minister.

Mr. N Buxton's work for Sugar Industry.

The Daily Herald, Friday, October the 16th, 1925.

"I have never known any good work in this country without there being a Buxton in it," said Sir James Martin, presiding yesterday, at the opening of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, –one of the six new factories promised in connection with the passing of the Sugar, (Subsidy) Act, of 1925.

“I hope,” Sir James went on, “that this will mark the beginning of an era of success for an industry that should bring lasting benefit to the agricultural community. Mr Noel Buxton, the Minister of Agriculture in the late Labour government, gave this industry every possible assistance in his power.” (Hear, hear.)

The new factory is one of three, out of the half-dozen that the Anglo-Dutch group has agreed to be responsible for, and Sir James, commenting on “the Dutch influence in this industry,” declared that the Dutch had shown their faith in the British Government. architects, builders, labour and farmers by finding practically the whole of the capital for the Ely factory.

Minister on Ex-Minister.

Declaring the factory open, Mr Edward F L Wood, Member of Parliament, the Minister of Agriculture, added his tribute to Mr Buxton's efforts for the British sugar industry.

“As a result of the efforts of Mr Buxton and the last Government, succeeded by our own, he said, we have been able to report a very definite progress of the whole national undertaking.”

He added that 55,000 acres are now under sugar beet, and that it is estimated that this figure will increase to 100,000 next year.

The Ely factory offers 54 shillings a ton for sugar beets. The capacity of the new plant is from 120,000 and 150,000 tons, and already, 1,179 sugar beet growers, mostly within 20 miles of the factory, are ready to supply the raw material.

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The Beet Sugar industry.

The Stratford-Upon-Avon Herald, Friday, October the 23rd 1925.

Every day of the year we pay about £1,000,000 for imported foodstuffs, much of which could be saved if our land, richer in itself, were made as productive as that of Germany or Denmark. But one important step is being taken to reduce the foreign food bill, by the development of the British beet sugar industry. Under the Sugar (Subsidy) Act of this year, the industry is assured of state assistance for the next ten years, and with this encouragement it is making rapid headway. Some six or seven new factories are being opened this year, and it is expected to have as many more in operation by the end of 1926.

One of the three of the Anglo-Dutch group, erected on the banks of the Ouse near Ely, was opened by the Ministry of Agriculture last week. Much of the machinery employed is of Dutch origin, but the factories to be erected by the Anglo Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, one of which will be in Scotland, will be equipped with British plant throughout. A sugar factory is a big undertaking. The buildings of the one at Ely alone cover over two acres, and the total area is 66 acres, provided with railways, roads and wharves. The industry is of importance, not only by making us less dependent on imported sugar, but for the employment it provides for large numbers of workers, both in summer and winter. This year the area under sugar beet was 55,000 acres. Next year it is likely to be 100,000 acres.

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New Beet Sugar Factory

Opening of Ely plant.

The Boston Guardian, Saturday, October the 24th, 1925.

On Thursday last—within a year of the site being cleared—the Ely Beet Sugar factory was opened, in the presence of a distinguished company, by the Right Hon. Edward F L Wood, MP, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The factory has been erected at Adelaide, just over a mile outside the city, and stands in a most advantageous position for transport by rail and water, the London and North Eastern Railway lines running at the rear, and the River Ouse along the front of the buildings. Special arrangements have been made to utilise the Ouse, a fleet of barges being available for the carriage of beets by water from the Fens.

The factory has many other great advantages to begin with, and not the least of these is the experience and technical knowledge of the directorate and staff. The Directors of the Company are Sir James Martin, (Chairman) of Messrs. Martin, Farlow and Company, Incorporated Accountants; Sir Fred Hiam, a leading Cambridgeshire farmer; Colonel G L Courthope, Chairman of the Central Landowners' Association, and the three well-known beet sugar experts, Mr J P van Rossum, Doctor A Wijnberg, and Doctor A van Loon. The Right Honourable George H. Roberts will act as alternate Director to Mr. van Rossum, and Mr. Alfred Wood, of 6, Lancaster-place, Wellington-street, Strand, WC2, is the Secretary. The solicitors are Messrs. Morris, Ward-Jones, Kennett and Company, of London. Mr. Willemsteyn is the General Manager of the undertaking, and here again, the Company is fortunate, as Mr Willemsteyn has not only had a wide experience of the beet sugar industry in Holland, but his knowledge of conditions in England cannot be excelled, as he had a great deal to do with the inauguration of the Cantley Factory, and was the technical advisor to the industry in England before the war. Mr. E Blount is already well known and esteemed as the Commercial Manager.

The buildings.

The contract for the buildings has been in the hands of Messrs. Hal Williams and Company, Factory House, Holborn, and a month or two ago, when the work was being got on with all possible speed, well over a thousand men were employed—a start was made with three or four hundred.

The buildings comprise two sheds 450 feet by 45 feet, two more 200 feet by 52 feet, and 29 feet, and two others 280 feet by 54 feet and 29 feet.

The main building consists of a dried pulp shed 164 feet by 82 feet, a pulp drying and beet washing shed, 164 feet by 82 feet, engine room, lime building, etc., 112 feet by 80 feet, main machinery hall and sugar house, 276 feet by 82 feet, boiler house 186 feet by 82 feet, repair shop 58 feet by 48 feet, sugar store 192 feet by 84 feet, and offices 28 feet by 32 feet; the height of the main building to plate is 52 feet, 6 inches, and others 26 feet, 3 inches.

The factory has been designed to deal with 1,200 tons of beets per day, and from this enormous quantity, the sugar extracted will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred tons. The average beet now under cultivation for this year's "campaign", is well above the promoters' expectations, and better still, the season has been an exceptionally good one.

Last year the average yield of beets grown in the district was 12 tons per acre, and it was of very good sugar content. According to present deliveries there is every reason to hope that

this season's crop will be quite as good, if not better, than last year's. Another highly important point is that 96 percent of the growers have contracted to grow for the Ely Factory for a three-year period, thus taking full advantage of the better price.

The guests.

Among those who had accepted invitations to be present were: Mr. Cole Ambrose, Mr. Arthur Amos, Mr. W A Appleton, Mr. G L Archer, Mr. W J Atkinson, Mr. G E Bedford, Mr. J R Bennett, Mr. J E Bidwell, Sir Roland Biffin, Mr. R Bilsland, Lord Bledisloe of Lydney, Sir Stanley Bois, Sir Leonard Brassey, Major Gerard Buxton, Mr. S P Cherrington, Mr. T W H Clarke, Sir W H Clarke, Mr. F S Courtney, Mr. S E Covill, Mr. D Crawford, Mr. V G Crittall, Mr. C E Cross, Mr. S Cross, Mr, G H Davis, Mr. T W Day, Mr. A W Dean, Mr. Arthur Drake, Viscount Feilding, Mr. J M Fells, Lord Fermoy, Lord Ffrench, Mr. Henry Fiden, Mr. H Fiske, Sir Francis Floud, (Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture), Mr. Henry Gardner, Mr. J Garton, Mr. B I Gates, Mr. C S Gibson, Mr. F Giddens, Mr. A Giles, Mr. J Crossland Graham, Mr. A Graham-Smith, Sir John L Green, Mr. A R Grieve, Mr. A Harrison, Major W R Hartcup, Mr. E S Harvey, Mr. E L Hawkins, Lord Illingworth, Lord Invernairn of Strathnairn, Sir Ernest Jardine, Sir H Lucas-Tooth, Mr. J H L Luddington, Mr. C Lyle, Mr. H G Martin, Mr. H J Martin, Mr. J H Martin, Sir James Martin (Chairman, Ely Beet Sugar Factory), Mr. W Foot Mitchell, Mr. S Moore, Mr. S Moore junior, Mr. W Foster Moore, Alderman Peake, Mr. F Pearson, Mr. S Pearson, Mr. T Pearson, the Honourable G Laurie Pile, Mr. A T Radcliffe, Mr. F S Rainer, Mr. Edmund Read, Mr. J K Richardson, Mr. S Richardson, Mr. A Rickwood, Mr. C Rickwood, Mr. F W Ruston, Sir Robert Rutherford, Mr. E W Shepperton, Mr. H J Skelton, Mr, G H Smalley junior, Mr. C C Smith, Mr. N W Smith-Carington, Mr. F H G Stockdale, Mr. W E Stockdale, Mr. H W Street, Mr. C W Tindall, Mr. D B Toye, Mr. E B Tredwin, Mr. E Turner, Brigadier-General W W Warner, Mr. M J Watt, Mr, C Dampier Whetham, Mr. E H Wilkins, Mr. Hal Williams, Captain R G M. Wilson, Lieutenant-Colonel L P Winby, Sir Richard Winfrey, and Sir Frederick Wise.

The opening.

Mr E F L Wood, Minister of Agriculture, performed the opening ceremony, and in the course of his remarks, said that the experience in all countries had shown that for the establishment of this industry, some measure of early assistance was necessary, and he was confident that in ten years' time, they would see the result of the government's assistance in the secure establishment of the industry.

In the first stage of the movement great hopes are aroused, but disappointment followed quickly upon the heels of hope, and it was not until they reached the second phase of the Subsidy Act, that they were able to assure themselves of their real prospects of the secure and successful establishment of the new industry.

The result of the efforts of the late Government and the present Government had been an achievement of very definite progress of the whole national undertaking.

When he read the proposals before the House of Commons last December, he said eight new factories were in contemplation, and it was hoped six would be ready for work this autumn.

Events have proved better than his hopes, for no fewer than seven factories would be opening this season, of which the one at Ely was the first.

This year we had 55,000 acres under sugar beet, and the estimated acreage for next year would be something over 100,000.

A period of preparation.

“I am not,” he added, “a warm believer in subsidies in general. I have always felt a subsidy to be justified, must be justified on exceptional grounds, and must be able to show reasonable certainty that it will effect its purpose. The state, has in this case, a complete certainty of getting equivalent value in production for every pound of subsidy it is called upon to pay.

I hope, however, that both factories and growers will regard the subsidy period, not as a period of existence made tolerably comfortable by the dole of State support, but as a period of stern and unremitting preparation for the free competition that is to follow it.”

Referring to the effect of beet growing on agriculture, the Minister said beet crops had been shown to be the most profitable of any in the Eastern Counties, and he did not think it was extravagant to hope that in many cases on lighter soils, where corn growing was unprofitable, farmers would find a substitute for corn in the growing of beet.

He said this to emphasise the public value of this movement to the case of agricultural employment and agricultural welfare, and one which, incidentally, would help the smallholder and the small farmer no less than the large farmer.

There was no doubt great importance was attached to the reduction of our food imports, and he could not think there was anybody who would not welcome the opportunities of producing an increasing proportion of a foodstuff which was essential to every household in the land, for which we had hitherto had to rely on foreign importations.

Factory development.

Sir James Martin, Chairman of the Director's, who presided at the opening ceremony, which was attended by many Members of Parliament, representatives of various manufacturing groups connected with the sugar business, and representatives of farming, pointed out that the beet sugar industry in this country was of recent establishment, and that before the war there was only one factory operating.

Since then, two other factories have been erected at Kelham and Colwick, and the Ely factory was one of the six new factories promised in connection with the British Sugar Subsidy Act, 1925.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory is built on the Bank of the River Ouse, one and a half miles from Ely station.

The total area of the factory site is 66 acres.

There are four miles of railway sidings and stalls for dealing with the beet traffic, and silos covering 50,000 square feet have been constructed for the receipt of beet, which come in by rail, road, and water. The output of sugar at the factory will not be less than 15,000 tons.

At work.

Sugar beet factories. Daily capacity of 8,000 tons.

The winter “campaign” for the manufacture of beet sugar in this country has now been entered upon, and the following is a list of the factories engaged together with their daily capacity in dealing with raw beet.

The following factories are listed under the headings, factory, daily capacity in tons, and the owners of the factories.

Colwick, Nottingham, 1,000 tons. Anglo Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation.
Spalding, Lincolnshire, 500 tons. Anglo Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation.
Kidderminster, 500 tons. Anglo Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation.
Cantley, Norfolk, 1,000 tons. English Beet Sugar Corporation.
Kelham, Newark, 750 tons. English Beet Sugar Corporation. (Leased to).
Ely, Cambs, 1,200 tons. Ely Beet Sugar Factory.
Bury Saint Edmunds, 1,000 tons. United Beet Sugar Company.
Ipswich, 1,200 tons. Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory. Limited.
Wissington, Norfolk, 500 tons. British Sugar Manufacturers.
Greenock, 500 tons. Orchard Sugar Company, Greenock

The total acreage under beet sugar in this country this season is 55,000. Next year it is expected to be 100,000, with further factories in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Essex, Fifeshire and at Yeovil.
The average yield of raw beet, hitherto, has worked out to about 9 tons per acre, but with increasing experience on the part of growers, this ought to be very much improved.

There are many cases in the Eastern Counties where the yield is 15 tons and over. The farmer delivering to a factory in its first year gets 46 shillings and 6 pence per ton, and 54 shillings per ton where the factory is in its second, or subsequent season.

Cost of transit falls upon the grower. Next season, an all-round figure of 54 shillings per ton will be paid by all factories, whether in the first year or not.

To qualify for this figure, the beet must have a sugar content of 15 and a half percent. For every 1 percent over that amount, the factory pays an extra 2 shillings and 6 pence per ton.

Last year in this country, the average sugar content was 16.74 percent, higher than on the continent.

Owing to the nature of the beet, it cannot be indefinitely stored, and factories work continuously night and day when operations have once begun.

Three shifts are worked per day, and the “campaign” lasts from 80 to 100 days.

As the total factory capacity now available, is equal in dealing with 8,000 tons a day, it follows, that in the course of the present campaign, as much as 800,000 tons of beet could be dealt with.

The fact is, however, that the quantity of beet grown will probably not be half that amount. In other words, factory development has got much ahead of the disposition of farmers, to grow the raw material.

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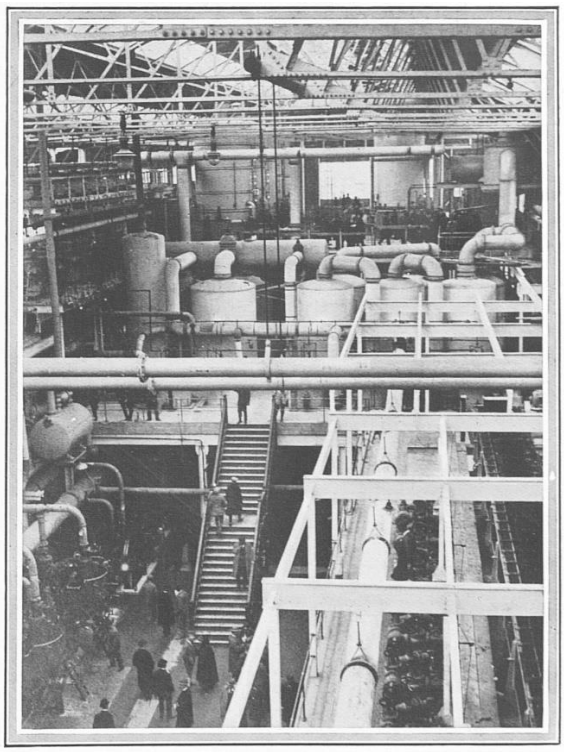
Ely Sugar Factory Opening Photograph.

The Sphere, Saturday, October the 24th, 1925.

Photograph and caption below.

Caption reads: The Minister of Agriculture inaugurates the new Beet Sugar factory at Ely.



THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE INAUGURATES THE NEW BEET SUGAR FACTORY AT ELY

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Developing Sugar Beet Industry.

Four-fold advantages.

The Grimsby Daily Telegraph, Friday, October the 30th, 1925.

Sir A Steel-Maitland, (Minister of Labour), speaking in the Easington Division of Birmingham, last night said unemployment had been decreasing, and apart from the coal industry, the figures of unemployment were infinitely better today than last year.

Referring to the great development this year in the sugar industry in this country, he said the advantages were four-fold. In the first place, the industry had to buy its machinery, and, therefore, provide work, as did also the erection of the factories. Next, the industry gave employment to a considerable number of men. Thirdly, by manufacturing sugar, we were assisting to pay for the food and raw materials which we imported from abroad.

The last advantage was this: The greatest benefit ever conferred on German agriculture, was the development of the sugar beet industry in that country because of its effect upon other branches of agriculture, and there was every likelihood, that it would confer a similar benefit upon agriculture in this country.

The Cabinet the other day, decided that we would give a loan to help to develop the British Protectorate and Mandated Territories in East Africa, where there was a great rich country capable of growing some of the most valuable raw materials that we needed. About one half of the loan was to be spent on goods and materials from this country. The goods and materials that would be sent from this country would assist the iron and steel and heavy engineering

trades, which were hardest hit at present. In the end, the loan and interests on it would be repaid, while we should benefit by the production of the raw materials which we needed in a British protected country, and under British control.

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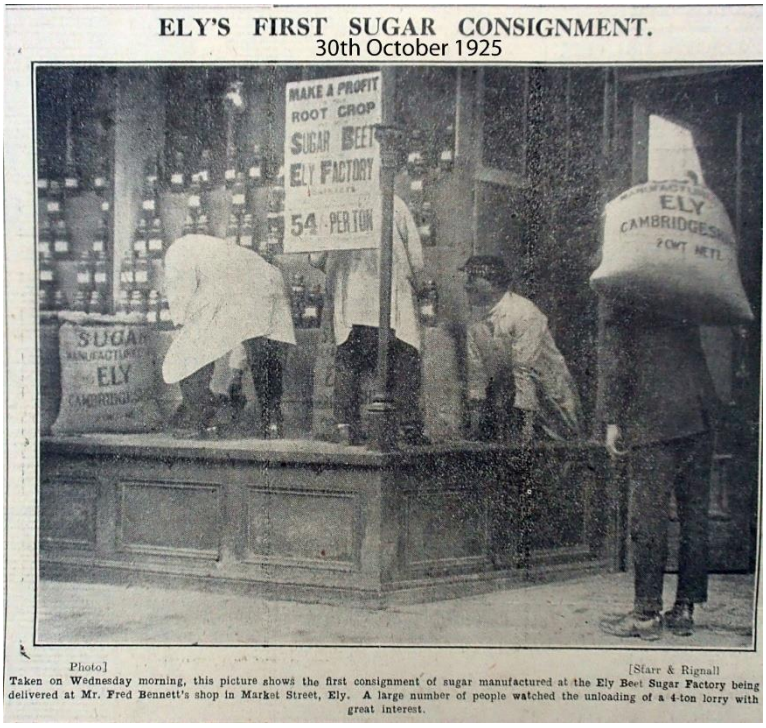
Ely's first Sugar consignment.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, October the 30th, 1925.

Photograph and caption below.

Caption reads: Taken on Wednesday morning, this picture shows the first consignment of sugar manufactured at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory being delivered to Mr. Fred Bennett's shop in Market Street, Ely. A large number of people watched the unloading of a 4-ton lorry with great interest.




Photo] [Sfarr & Rignall

Taken on Wednesday morning, this picture shows the first consignment of sugar manufactured at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory being delivered at Mr. Fred Bennett's shop in Market Street, Ely. A large number of people watched the unloading of a 4-ton lorry with great interest.

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Councillor A E Stubbs at Ely.

The Beet Sugar Industry and Agriculture.

Housing, a national scandal.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 30th, 1925.

“Agricultural labourers get 30 shillings a week, and houses in which you can move the staircase when the kiddies want to play. They are not housed as well as race horses at Newmarket, and in some cases the houses are not as good as pigsties. Paraffin oil for the sty keeper, and electric light for the pig, –that's our state of topsy turvydom”.

This is an extract from an address given by Councillor A E Stubbs, (Cambridge), at a well-attended meeting held at the Chequer Hall, Ely, on Monday evening in connection with the Workers Union. Mr J L George, (Peterborough), presided.

## Organisation, Education and Compensation.

Mr George, in his opening speech, said he hoped the Ely beet sugar factory would be a success, not only from the employers, but from the worker's point of view, and also from the national standpoint, in order to save money from being spent abroad for sugar.

The Workers Union had been formed many years for the benefit of the workers, and had every class of member. They had 6,000 members in the Burton Breweries, several thousand at Leicester, making boots, etc., office cleaners at Whitehall, and thousands of agricultural labourers.

The advantage of that union was, that if there was a dispute in any section, and as a last resort a strike was called, 3,000 men would be brought out and the funds would not stop, because workers in other industries would be paying in all the time. Now they had the beet sugar factory they wanted to have the employees there in the Workers Union.

As far as the Workers Union was concerned, they liked to work harmoniously with the employers. The workers must realise that the success of the industry in which they were employed, was their success, as well as their employers, but they should know where they stood.

The employer was always ready to get the cheapest labour, and to base wages on the poor standard of the agricultural labourer. After dealing at some length with the advantages, the County Council could afford the children of workers in regard to their education, but which the workers representatives could not obtain, owing to the opposition of the farming element, and with the difficulty men with large families experienced in obtaining cottages in which to live.

Mr George proceeded to speak of the benefits members of the Union gained, in regard to securing compensation for accidents sustained in the course of their employment.

While in London, he had heard there had been some accidents at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and in view of the possibilities of such accidents, it was the duty of every man to be in the union, so as to ensure that he had fair treatment, and he therefore trusted they would establish the Workers Union in Ely.

Personally, he did not believe in going up to an employer with a loaded revolver and saying: “Give us what we want, or I'll shoot you.”

## The Beet Sugar Industry.

Councillor Stubbs said he wished to speak of the importance of the workers in the beet sugar and agricultural industries in Ely being organised, from the employees as well as the employer's point of view.

First of all, he desired to congratulate those who had the foresight and wisdom to see that in this country they could grow their own sugar.

A few years ago, many experiments were made, and a few people, determined to carry on, formed the British Beet Sugar Society. The Workers Union was represented in this.

They, as a union, were interested in the industry, which had made rapid strides, and many factories besides those at Ely and Wissington, (Norfolk), had been built.

There was one at Cantley, where there were many members of the Workers Union. He, (Councillor Stubbs), was keenly interested in the new industry, but while it depended upon the employers putting their money into it, he felt that success could not be achieved without organisation on both sides, –the workers and the employers. Sugar Beet production was very difficult, and being new to them, they had much to learn about it.

Addressing the sugar factory workers, Councillor Stubbs said they would be in the factory for four months, and would then go back to the land to fill in time there, and during that period their wages would be governed by the Cambs and Isle of Ely Agricultural Wages Committee.

He would not say that a higher scale would not be paid for knocking out the sugar beet, but in the ploughing and sowing operations, the worker would be in the same position as the agricultural labourer. When the harvest was gathered, they would be back in the factory.

There was a difficulty already. When he was travelling from March by train the other day, he heard a farmer say, “The subsidy is all right, but where are we going to get the labour? “

It was a bad policy for the employers to sack men when there was a shortage of labour. It was likely, continued Mr Stubbs, that a committee would be set up, consisting of representatives of the Farmers Union, Workers Union, and Agricultural Workers Union, with beet sugar factory representatives, to see how they could have labour ready when wanted.

Surely that would be an advantage to the industry, and satisfactory to the workers, to know they would get jobs which would be secure.

Not long ago, the Bury Saint Edmunds farmers brought Irish labour into the country, while there were 1,250,000 unemployed over here.

Suffolk men did the drilling and sowing for 7 and a half pence an hour, while Irishmen, who knew nothing about the cultivation, got 50 shillings a week for taking out the sugar beet crop. Bad organisation was the reason for this state of affairs.

At Shippea Hill and thereabouts, farmers were paying 7 shillings and 8 shillings per day for labour, and glad to get it at that. In Cambs and the Isle of Ely, the agricultural labour received 7 1/2 pence per hour, (30 shillings per week), and had not the Workers Union put in the work they had, they would have been down to 24 shillings.

“You know very well, that the beet sugar industry is subsidised, and that has got to come out of you and me by direct or indirect taxation”, remarked Councillor Stubbs.

At present, the people who are paying the subsidy had not had a say in matters. If the farmers had the subsidy, they should give a guarantee of a fair wage for the workers. They were getting ten pence per hour at the Ely beet sugar factory, –bricklayers received a shilling. Councillor Stubbs here read out the headlines of Report of the National Farmers Union meeting held at Cambridge, published in the “Cambridge Weekly News,” on October the 9th, referring to a recent meeting of the Farmers Union held in Cambridge, which had been attended by local farmers.

Councillor Stubbs said that according to the report in the “Weekly News,” the Cambs and Isle of Ely Wages Committee had been criticised for stabilising thirty shillings a week for agricultural labourers for a further 12 months.

On September the 7th, he, (Councillor Stubbs), moved at a meeting of the committee that the agricultural worker should receive £2 for a 48-hour week, summer and winter, but the farmers said, “No; sixpence per hour for a 48 hours week in winter, and 53-hours a week in summer.

“That,” declared Councillor Stubbs with emphasis, “is slavery.”

“Agricultural labourers get 30 shillings a week, and houses in which you can move the staircase when the kiddies want to play.

They are not housed as well as race horses at Newmarket, and in some cases the houses are not as good as pig-sties. Paraffin oil for the sty-keeper, and electric light for the pig, –that's our state of topsy-turvydom. The national housing in this country is a scandal.”

When Farmers’ wives would rebel.

Councillor Stubbs said he felt humiliated when, at a meeting of the Cambs and Isle of Ely Agricultural Wages Committee, one of the employers side moved that the labourers should receive 24 shillings per week.

He felt that if the farmers thought that was sufficient, they ought to be placed in the agricultural workers position themselves. “If the industry can only afford 24 shillings a week, the sooner the Government takes it over the better,” said the speaker.

In his opinion, the farmer should not have a subsidy until he made good use of his land. That a man should work 51 hours a week, and take home 30 shillings to his wife was a national disgrace.

Sometimes, he thought it would be better to organise the women rather than the men, and call a housewives’ strike. (Voice, “You’ll never do it.”) If the farmers and landowners’ wives had to live the lives of the agricultural labourers’ wives, he was sure they would be rebels in a fortnight.

In conclusion, Councillor Stubbs urged all farm workers to come into the Workers’ Union, and he appealed to them to take an intelligent interest in the beet sugar industry. Organisation, he added, was the key to success. They should, therefore, join the union and play their part.

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A Great New Industry.

Development in Beet Sugar making.

New factories proposed.

Scheme that will create much employment.

The Western Mail, Tuesday, November the 3rd, 1925.

The growing importance to this country of the beet sugar industry, is exemplified in striking fashion in the message, –given below, –from our London correspondent.

It will come as a gratifying surprise to the public, and more especially the considerable portion of it out of employment, that important developments which are bound to absorb the labours of a considerable number of workers, are contemplated.

The Subsidy Act, passed by the Government earlier this year, provided for a period of ten years in which the industry can establish itself, and the measure has enabled it to increase considerably.

Steps are being taken to build several new factories at a considerable outlay during next year.

Work for 23,000 people next year.

From our own correspondent.

The new factories, which it is intended to build next year, will be located at Peterborough, Halesworth, Frimley, Poppleton, (Yorkshire), Felstead, Cupar, and two other places not yet decided on.

It is estimated that these eight factories will bring orders to British engineers totalling between £800,000 and £900,000.

The cost of building the factories will amount to over £1,000,000, of which about half will be distributed in wages on the sites.

The construction of other factories is contemplated, and sites have been, or are being acquired, in Yorkshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Hants, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Bristol, Lancashire, Surrey, Bedfordshire, Northants, Kent, Lincolnshire, and Suffolk.

Work and orders.

At least 75 percent of the machinery must, under the Act, be of British origin. The four new factories at Spalding, Kidderminster, Bury Saint Edmunds and Wissington, have this year received at least that proportion of British machinery.

It is calculated that during this year, not less than 5,000 additional men have found employment on the land alone in connection with sugar beet.

The building of new factories has given work for 6,000 more, and in the actual manufacture of sugar from October to January, at least 5,000 men will be employed.

As a result of the development of the industry, it is anticipated that in 1926, at least 6,000 men will be employed in factory building, and 17,000 in field and factory, who would not otherwise have been employed.

A scheme is being preferred, to facilitate the technical training of British chemists in sugar manufacture. During the next few months, about 60,000 tons of home-produced sugar will be available for the consumer.

Great benefits,

The advantages resulting from these developments are threefold: in respect of agriculture, unemployment, and reduction of adverse trade balance. As regards agriculture, the benefits are substantial.

Beet cultivation improves the land, and provides a high yield of the succeeding crop. Beet pulp, –a by-product of beet sugar, –has a high milk-producing value. Further, beet is a

profitable crop, and, the price being fixed, the farmer is not worried as to the prevailing autumn market prices, as in the case of other farm crops.

Even more striking, are the advantages as a contribution to lightening the burden of unemployment. A single example of this is the new factory at Ely, opened by the Minister of Agriculture on October the 15th.

During the building of this factory, nearly 1,000 men were, on average, employed on building and installation of machinery, and the wages bill paid on the site alone has amounted to £100,000. This is exclusive of wages paid in the engineering shops.

Ely is only one of the ten factories which will be working this season, and of these, seven are new factories.

At least £500,000 has, therefore, been distributed this year in wages for erection. Moreover, the manufacture of beet sugar machinery in this country provides additional employment at a time of great depression in the engineering industry.

A beet factory with a daily capacity of 1,000 tons requires machinery to the value of £150,000, and under that, the railways and other industries also benefit indirectly, for every ten tons of beet handled at the factory, require one ton of coal and half a ton of limestone, besides considerable quantities of filter-bags, sugar sacks, and other materials.

Opening for students.

Furthermore, about 60 trained engineers and chemists are employed at each factory. An opening is therefore being provided for the students at the technical colleges and universities.

The acreage under beet this year was over 55,000 acres, over 100 percent more than last year.

To employ the existing factories to their full capacity, an acreage of 100,000 will be required this year, and to meet, in addition, the initial requirements of the proposed new factories, this must be increased to at least 160,000 acres.

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Export of sugar.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, November the 20th, 1925.

For the first time within its history, Lynn has become a port for the export of sugar. The first cargo, 200 tons, manufactured at the Ely factory, was on Saturday, shipped into the “Earl of Durham” for conveyance to Grimsby. A further consignment of 300 tons was shipped on Monday.

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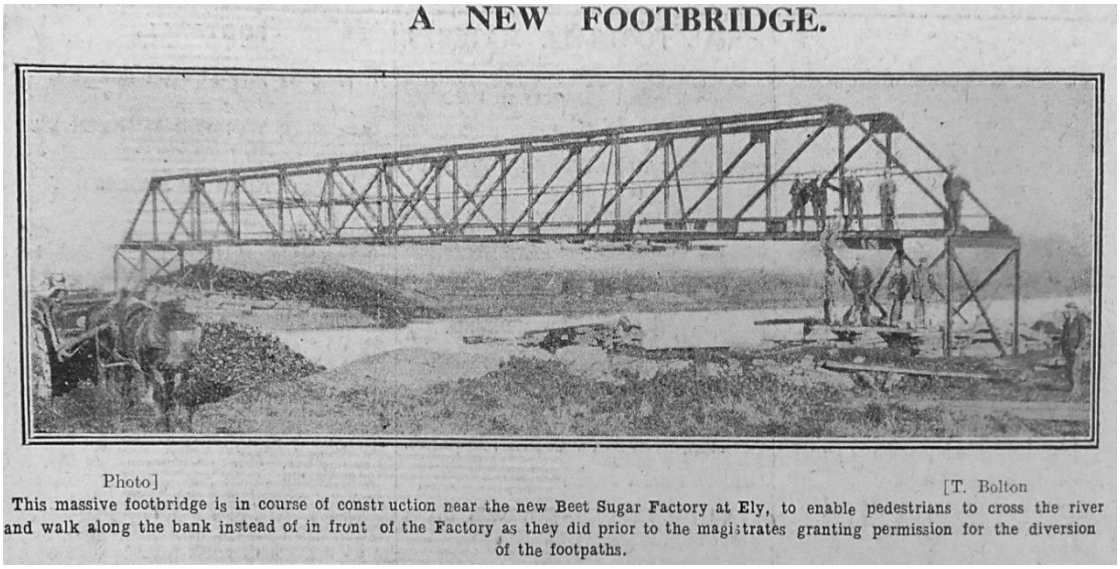
A New Footbridge.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, November the 20th, 1925.

Photograph below and caption.

Caption reads: This massive footbridge is in course of construction near the new Beet Sugar Factory at Ely, to enable pedestrians to cross the river and walk along the bank instead of in front of the factory, as they did prior to the magistrates granting permission for the diversion of the footpaths.



A NEW FOOTBRIDGE.

Photo] [T. Bolton

This massive footbridge is in course of constr uction near the new Beet Sugar Factory at Ely, to enable pedestrians to cross the river and walk along the bank instead of in front of the Factory as they did prior to the magistrates granting permission for the diversion of the footpaths.

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Keeping the Factories Going.

The Saint Andrews Citizen, Saturday, November the 21st, 1925.

The same issue of the *Scottish Farmer* has a note on sugar beet, as follows: –

“Sugar beet propagandists deserve credit for the unflagging zeal displayed in developing the industry. The visit of Scottish farmers to Colwick, was skilfully managed, and the impression created by the evidence of faith on the part of capitalists in erecting these great factories, is all to the good.

The issue of the Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture for November, contains a good deal of information on the subject. The Ely factory was opened on the 15th of October by the Minister of Agriculture, and it is stated that this season there are at work no fewer than ten factories.

Last season only three were in operation, Cantley, (Norfolk), and Kelham and Colwick, (Nottingham); In addition, this year there are factories at Ely, Spalding, Kidderminster, Ipswich, Bury Saint Edmunds, Wissington and Greenock. It is anticipated that a further eight factories will be erected during the ensuing year, including, it is to be presumed, the factory at Cupar, and this will call for an addition of 55,000 acres to the area under sugar beet.

These factories cover an enormous extent of ground; Ely factory, on the banks of the Ouse, covers no less an area than 66 acres. Four miles of sidings have been erected, and silos covering 50,000 square feet have been constructed for the receipt of beets, which come in by rail, road and water. The point of all this is, that farmers are asked to play up to the faith of the engineering capitalists and grow enough beet to keep these great factories fully employed.

The factories and the growers are essential to each other, but the growers are the lynch pin of the chariot, –so the Minister of Agriculture says."

The *Scottish Farmer* seems to cast some element of doubt on the new venture when it talks about the "faith of the engineering capitalists." The Anglo-Scottish Corporation are spending millions of pounds on beet sugar factories, certain in the knowledge that they will get a fair return for the capital which they are sinking. If they do not get enough sugar beet in this country to keep their factories going, what is to prevent them importing the raw material from abroad? If this happens, the British farmer will have only himself to blame.

Cane Sugar or Beet Sugar?

Housewives are asking whether cane sugar or beet sugar is preferable for household use. The impression has prevailed for a long time that cane sugar was the best and purest for domestic purposes.

Beet sugar sent to us from Germany was an inferior bluish article; but now we are changing all that. Provided beet sugar and cane sugar are refined to the same degree, there is no difference between them, and even an expert cannot tell which is which.

In 1909, there were imported into this country, 1,467,764 tons of beet sugar, and only 292,393 tons of cane sugar, so that possibly many housewives who thought they were using cane sugar when making jam, have had beet sugar supplied.

Some years ago, extensive experiments were carried out in California with the different sugars used in canning operations, and out of seven thousand cans it was found that only seven went wrong where cane sugar had been used, and five where beet sugar was the ingredient in the syrup.

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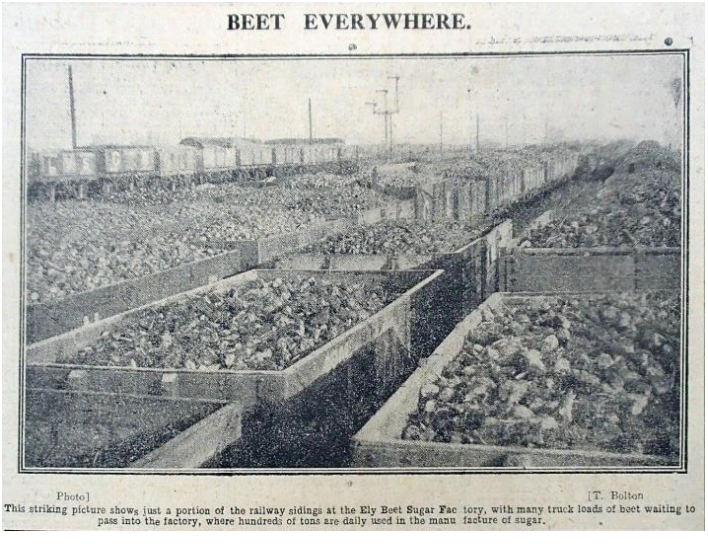
Beet Everywhere.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, November the 27th, 1925.

Photograph below and caption.


BEET EVERYWHERE.
Photo] [T. Bolton
This striking picture shows just a portion of the railway sidings at the Ely Beet Sugar Fac tory, with many truck loads of beet waiting to pass into the factory, where hundreds of tons are daily used in the manu facture of sugar.

Caption reads: This striking picture shows just a portion of the railway sidings at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, with many truck loads of beet waiting to pass into the factory, where hundreds of tons are daily used in the manufacture of sugar.

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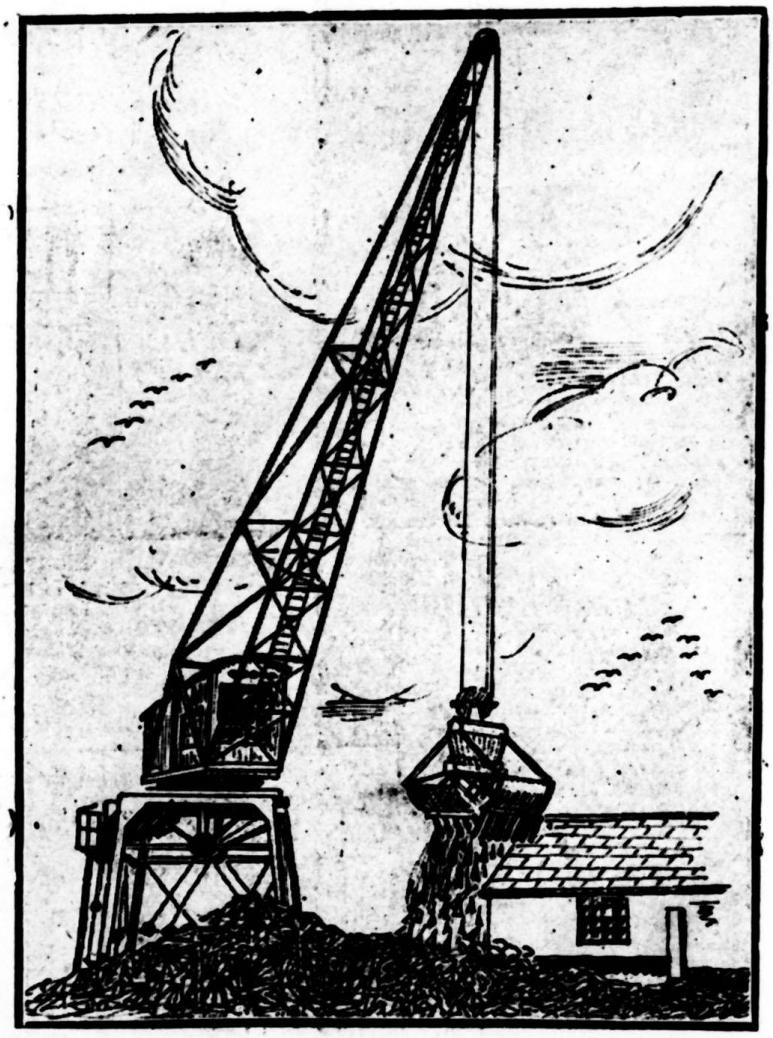
An Artist's Impression and Caption of One of a Pair of Cranes.

The Spalding Guardian, Saturday, November the 28th, 1925.

Caption reads: The great crane, (one of a pair) at Ely's vast Sugar Beet Factory, with its automatic grabber dropping the beets, (which have just arrived at the docks by water) into the washer before they go through the conversion process.



**The great crane (one of a pair) at Ely's vast Sugar Beet Factory, with its automatic grabber dropping the beets (which have just arrived at the dock by water) into the washer before they go through the conversion process.**

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# The Ely Dispute.

## Alleged Victimisation of Trade Union Men.

## Workers' meeting.

The Saffron Walden Press and News, Friday, December the 4th, 1925.

A general meeting of workers of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory was held at the Cooperative Hall, Broad Street, Ely, on Monday evening, when certain grievances in connection with the dispute came under discussion. Mr E V Watering, (organiser for the National Union of General and Municipal Workers) presided, and was supported by Messrs. C E Knight, (deputising for the London District Secretary of the union), A H Keeley, (organiser), R McLaughlan (London District Secretary, Electrical Trades Union), G H Yearsley and others. A collection taken by Master Yearsley, in aid of the Shepreth strikers, realised £1 and 3 pence.

### Discharge of 200 men.

The Chairman said the meeting had been called under the auspices of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, but they had a representative of the Electrical Trades Union), Mr R McLaughlin), and an official of the Amalgamated Engineering Union present. He then went on to deal with the Shepreth strike. Coming to the local dispute, the speaker said when he arrived at Ely last Thursday night with his friend Mr Keeley, for the express purpose of addressing a branch meeting, they were astounded to learn that trouble had broken out at the Beet Sugar Factory. They were informed that about two hundred men had been discharged from the factory, and they had not been told why. What aggravated the position was that they had been discharged without being paid the wages, as determined by a Court of Arbitration in London, where it was decided that the pay for unskilled labour should be increased from 10 pence to 11 1/2 pence per hour. Not only was there resentment in regard to the wages, but because of the dismissal of certain men who had made themselves responsible for the organisation of their fellow workers.

So great was the spirit of unity that had Mr Keeley and himself thought wise, it would have been possible to stop the work at the factory. However, they did not think such an action was necessary without all avenues being explored. In conjunction with the dismissal of the trade union organisers, numbering two, they had an interview with the employers on Friday morning, and submitted their case, and also that in connection with the wages question. As far as the latter was concerned, the employers had committed themselves, for on the Sunday night when the union held a meeting on the Market-square, Mr Blount interposed and said whatever Cantley did, Ely would do, and naturally, when the Arbitration Court's award was issued, they, (the trade union workers), expected the employers would meet it, and not aggravate matters by the dismissal of about 200 men without paying it. The employers said those men, –and 100 men who were to follow, –were included in a bulk of those to be discharged; they had instructions from the Government to reduce the number of workers to 600. This remained to be "explored."

### Spying.

He, (the chairman), resented the spying that seemed to be going on at the factory on trade union activities. It was not good taste, when men were acting in a constitutional way, to be followed about as they were on Friday morning. The management denied that the two men were victimised, and when facts were asked for, he considered there was evidence of a particular case. On the question of the award, Mr Keeley sent a telegram to Mr Yearsley stating the Court of Arbitration's decision, and when Mr Yearsley went, out of his own time, and not

for his own benefit, to inform the factory workers, he was met by a foreman and told that if he wanted to keep his job, he must leave trade unionism alone. That was clear evidence, he thought, of spotting and dismissal because of trade union activities. The management said they could consider the two men's cases and report on the same at 10pm on Friday. That night, he had to get on the telephone, and the nature of the information he received was confirmed in a letter dated November the 28th, which read as follows: “Dear Sir, --we confirm our telephone conversation of last night, when we informed you that we are paying our unskilled labour at eleven and a half pence per hour for this week on our next pay day.”

“We also intend to give the extra one and a half pence per hour back pay to all unskilled labour in our employment since October the 13th. We propose to start paying this back pay after next payday.”

“To show our men we are acting in good faith, we are prepared to offer the two men, Yearsley and Cash, unskilled jobs, it being impossible to replace them in their old jobs as they have ceased to exist.”

“We hope this matter is now settled to our mutual satisfaction, --Yours faithfully, per Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, E R Blount.”

By that, they could see the position at the moment. They would note the last sentence. If there was only one point, they could conclude that the matter was satisfactorily settled, because the two men (Messrs. Yearsley and Cash) wanted their rights settled. The second paragraph of the letter, he thought, was a long way from satisfactory.

A strange action.

Mr. Keeley, a member of the London committee, of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, said at the meeting on the Market Square. Mr Blount and Mr Fowler interjected, and he told them they could have the platform when he had finished. They interjected at least twice before they made themselves known. He said he was pleased to see them, and they said Ely would follow suit with Cantley in regard to wages. The union then had a letter to say that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Company would pay the Court of Arbitration's award, and the respective award. The former would not interfere with the bonus now in existence. Mr Fowler claimed it was superior to that at Cantley, and worked out to the better advantages for the workers.

They would remember that at the meeting, the representatives of the firm said they were actuated by a desire to make the industry a success. For a big firm to discharge a large maintenance engineering staff, led one to think that it was done for the purpose of getting rid of men, who, by permission of the firm, had acted within the factory as trade union representatives. Mr. Fowler had met Mr. Yearsley, and admitted that he was a fair and level headed man, and would meet him if there was any grievance, and if there were any men discharged who had nowhere to go, he would see him in order that they might arrange for meals and accommodation for them. One strange feature about things, was that the firm said they had difficulty in getting men. They had representatives in Kings Lynn to scrap up men to keep the factory going, and they had been to some expense in sending representatives to other parts for the same purpose. Moreover, they had had men, who had to creep into a bunch of straw and sleep like pigs, because they had nowhere else to go, and then all of a sudden, they had a surplus of 200 men!  It seems strange!

The object of the meeting was to say that all men discharged were to make application and get back pay. They also wanted the recognition of trade unionism and the reinstatement of the two men, whose places the firm said had not been filled.

“Stick together”.

Mr McLaughlan said he wished to deal with the subject from the historical aspect. He wished to say to the men that they could see the position they were in, because most of them only became trade unionists only a few months ago. When he came to Ely a few months ago, he was surprised to find so many unorganised workers at the factory. But now, despite the fact that a number of them were unemployed, he hoped they would stand by the trade union. The Electrical Trades Union, were fortunate in having a fairly powerful grip on the beet sugar and other industries in which they operated. Last Friday, he had a telephone message to say that a number of men had been discharged at Ely, and the terms of the award as previously agreed had not been paid, while two men, prominent in trade unionism, had also been dismissed. He immediately got hold of Mr Wood, (secretary of the Beet Sugar Society), a level-headed sane individual, who realised that in 1925, consideration had to be given to labour organisations, and told him the trouble. Mr Wood said it amazed him, because he had heard nothing of it. He would get on the telephone about it. Later he, (the speaker), received a message from Mr. Wood saying there had been a misunderstanding, and he hoped the matter would be put right. That morning, (Monday), Mr. Wood's assistant got in touch with him, (Mr. McLaughlan), and said he hoped he would use his influence to prevent any stoppage of the Ely factory, and if there were any difficulties, they could discuss them the following day.

In regard to Mr Yearsley’s case, he would say definitely that if there was anything they had got to struggle for, it was for those who took the responsibility of representing trade unionism; they would defend them bitterly if necessary. He considered, in the letter read that night, the firm admitted having made a bloomer in discharging Messrs Yearsley and Cash, to the extent that they were now offering them jobs in the works. He thought if things were handled properly, they would get the two men back again in their proper positions, but he, (the speaker), wanted to know that the men inside the factory would support them. They all wanted to fight, and not expect others to do it for them. The trade union representatives would meet the local management the following day, but he did not think they would get much farther. He thought they would have to meet the men “up top,” the local managers foremen, but he believed they would get the two men back. He trusted if there were any similar cases they would all stick together and get the men back. Mr C E Knight then addressed the meeting. stating the question under discussion resolved itself into getting Messrs. Yearsley and Cash reinstated.

Germans’ determination.

Mr. Jock Muir, said no German would work at the factory for less than 18 shillings per day. One told him so, with an emphatic shake of the head, accompanied by “No, no, no!” “I wish to God Englishman had the pluck to take up the same stand as the Germans, who will not work for ten pence per hour,” remarked Mr. Muir. He moved that Messrs. Knight and McLaughlan interview the management of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory the following day, with a view to getting Messrs. Yearsley and Cash reinstated, and failing success, the matter to be taken up to London. This was seconded, and carried unanimously. We have been given to understand since that, the matter will be dealt with in London. Further, information reaches us that about 45 men ceased to be employed at the factory on Tuesday, and approximately 50 more may be shortly placed in a similar position. This will reduce the number of workers at the factory to within the region of 670. Roughly 250 men have finished there within a week.

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Sugar Beet.

The Northampton Mercury, Friday, December the 25th, 1925.

It has been, again, a year of considerable expansion of the Sugar Beet industry, and to all appearances, it will continue for some time to come. Last year, only three factories were operating, whilst this season there are already eight in full work and two more nearing completion. Next year, it is stated, another eight factories are to be built and, if so, this means orders to British engineers valued at from £800,000 to £900,000, and the cost of buildings is estimated at a further £1,000,000, of which one-half will be spent in wages. Sites have been, or are being, acquired in Yorkshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Surrey. Bedford, Northamptonshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, and Suffolk. During the next few months, about 60,000 tons of home-produced sugar will be available for the consumer, and this quantity will be increased yearly. The cost of each factory is approximately £250,000, and it is not until one has the opportunity, (as I, fortunately had the other day, at the opening of the Ely factory), of seeing the immense plant and machinery, and the continuous process from the washing and pulping of the beet, to the finished product of granulated sugar, that it can be fully realised what a costly business it is to equip one of these factories.

More growers wanted.

The main difficulty appears to be in persuading agriculturalists to grow beet, despite the fact that a good crop will show a profit of from fifteen to twenty pounds per acre. This year, over 60,000 acres of beet have been grown, but that is a mere flea-bite, compared with the total area of arable land. When I visited Czechoslovakia, I found quite one sixth of the arable land of the country under beet. Each of our factories have men occupying all their time in prevailing upon the farming community, to grow sufficient acreage to keep the factory fully employed during the season, and up to now, they have not been wholly successful. It is a crop that requires much labour when it has to be lifted, and that apparently, is the trouble.

In other countries, labour is imported for the beet season, and it ought to be possible in this country; but at present, the Labour Exchanges do not appear very helpful. The railway companies have become alive to the advantages which the industry affords to railway traffic, but should go further.

There should be a temporary scheme, which enabled a farmer to deliver in a district not yet served by a factory, to an existing factory, at a carriage rate which places him in a position not less fortunate than the grower, who is within a working radius of that factory. The railway companies would be repaid, in the additional transport of coal, limestone, etc., involved in producing sugar from the beet so secured.

They would thus be assisting the industry to gain experience and form a judgement as to the most suitable districts for new factories, and their best situation. The amount of sugar manufactured this season from English-grown beet amounts to about one week’s supply for the nation; so, we have a long way to go yet, before it can be made an appreciable difference in the price of sugar to the consumer.

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Letters to the Editor.

Farm workers and Sugar Beet.

The Stratford-Upon-Avon Herald, Friday, January the 29th, 1926.

Sir. --This new industry was projected by the Labour Government, and put into action by the present Government. It is noticeable that the factories draw their supplies from adjacent farms.

The factory portion of this industry is subsidised, –i.e., on every hundredweight of sugar produced up to October, 1928, a payment of 19 shillings and 6 pence is made by the Treasury, so that the factories operating this infant industry may become securely established without fear of foreign competition or possible slumps in price. In 1925 the subsidy totalled two-and-a-half millions sterling. The subsidy is so graduated as to disappear by October, 1934, when it is hoped that the industry will be secure.

Unskilled factory workers at Cantley, (Norfolk), receive 14 shillings per week, with an average bonus of 7 shillings and 6 pence, making a weekly minimum of 53 shillings and 6 pence. The worker on the farm growing the beet receives a statutory minimum of 28 shillings per week. Naturally, he would prefer 53 shillings and 6 pence, and many farm workers have applied for work in the factories.

On doing so, he is asked to produce his insurance card, but, since agriculture is an uninsured industry, the farm worker has no card to show. The Ministry of Labour has decreed that employment in these factories shall be provided through the Labour Exchanges, and, when a farm labourer applies, (to quote the minister's words): “Local officers have accordingly been instructed that, in cases where such men apply for temporary work, the Exchange should consult the farmer employer.” This results, usually, in the farm worker being sent back to his 28 shillings minimum. Can this be considered fair to the farm worker?

The Ministry pleads that it is providing work for the unemployed in neighbouring towns, and states also that, “local officers have no power to refuse to accept an application, whether made by permanent agricultural labourers or any other class of workpeople” wishing to enter the beet sugar industry.

This does not alter the fact, that farm labourers living near the Ely (Cambridgeshire) factory, have been refused work at that factory, when their normal occupation has become known, and the “farmer-employer” has been consulted. Freedom of contract is denied them. The factories are staffed with motor-cars, in some cases bringing Labour Exchange parties of workers from towns over 25 miles away.

Is there an understanding between the British Beet Sugar Society Limited, the National Farmers Union, and the present Government, for the purpose of preventing the higher wages at the sugar factories from tending to increase farm wages in neighbouring districts? So long as the factory-door is closed to the farm labourer, the farmer feels that a danger to his 28 shillings or 30 shillings minimum is out of the way, and he is prepared to consider growing beetroot, –at a guaranteed price. It is this spirit of reckless adventure which has made British agriculture what it is. –Yours, etc.

J H Clynes, Admin. Secretary, Agricultural Workers’ Campaign.

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Local farming—Notes and News.

Sugar Beet at Bletchley.

The Northampton Mercury, Friday, February the 26th, 1926.

It has been reported to the National Council of the Farmers' Union that the promoters of the Bletchley Sugar Beet Factory scheme had been unable to complete their arrangements for the erection of a factory to deal with the 1926 crop, but were proceeding with the matter with the intention of having a factory ready for the 1927 crop. Mr. de Berker, the promoter of the scheme, asked whether the Union would approve of his transferring his provisional contracts to the Ely factory, but the matter was left in the hands of the chairman to deal with after information had been given as to what terms the contracts were being transferred.

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Ely.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, May the 14th, 1926.

While working on a ladder at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory on Friday, May the 7th, Russell Hills, a painter, slipped and fell about 20 feet to the ground. He was conveyed by car to Dr. Davis, who found that the left arm and wrist were severely injured. The injured man is progressing satisfactorily.

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Alleged Negligence at Ely.

Widow's unsuccessful action against Sugar Beet Company.

Husbands' tragic death.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, May the 28th, 1926.

An accident on a railway siding by the site of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory, which resulted in the death of a carpenter at work near the line, had a sequel, at the Cambridgeshire Assizes at the Shire Hall, Cambridge, on Wednesday, when the widow brought an action for the loss sustained, by the death of her husband.

Plaintiff was Mrs. Martha Magness, of Peckham, London, and she brought the action on her own behalf, and on behalf of her daughter, Lillian, and against the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited., for their negligence, whilst her husband was working on their premises, at Ely, on

July the 20th, 1925, when employed by Messrs. Huntingdon Limited., contractors of Hanover Square, London.

Mr. M.L. Berryman (instructed by Messrs. Pattison and Brewer, London), appeared for plaintiff, and Mr. N.L. Macaskie and Mr. A.H. King, (instructed by Messrs. Morris, Ward-Jones, Kenneth and Co.), appeared for defendants.

Martha Magness, the plaintiff, said she was the widow of Thomas Edwin Magness, who had been employed at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory. He was a carpenter and joiner. She was aged 59, and her daughter Lillian was 16 when the accident happened to her husband. The wages she received from him vary from £3 10 shillings to £5 a week. Besides Lillian, she had two sons at home, and from them she received £2 10 shillings for their keep. Her husband had just turned 70 when he died. Up to the time of his death, he was strong and in good health, and had been working continuously.

Harry Littleboy, a labourer, employed by Messrs. Huntingdon at Ely, said that on the day of the accident he was working on the siding when the accident occurred. He was unloading the trucks standing on the siding. It was a rainy morning, and Magness stepped in over the line under the truck to get at some tools he had placed there out of the rain. At that moment, the train moves suddenly and the brake hit Magness in the hip and turned him over. His leg was also injured. There were 12 carpenters working there, and he had seen other men place their tools under the trucks. Trucks were often left there, and when they were to be moved from the siding, warning was usually given for the men to keep clear of the trucks as they were to be moved. On this morning, no warning was given for the men to stand clear.

Cross-examined, witness said this truck was used for carting goods to the site of the factory. The trucks had been there stationary from 9:30 a.m. They shunted on this siding nearly every hour of the day, and they never knew when they were going to move. The train was worked by three people. The trucks had been standing there in separate groups, and they were coupled up a short while before the accident. Because of the rain, Magness put his tools under a truck. It was the common practise for the driver to whistle when he was about to start. He heard a whistle sound for the men to break off work at 12:30. This whistle was different to the train whistle.

Frederick Victor Beavis said he was a labourer, and at the time of the accident he was employed by Messrs. Huntingdon at Ely. He saw the accident and the man injured. On previous occasions he had heard warning given in the form of the train whistle and a man shouting.

On this morning, he heard no warning given. The first wheel of the fourth truck from the engine ran over the man's leg.

Cross-examined, witness said that previously, the train was frequently shunted.

William James Engall, a navvy ganger, said he was superintending the unloading of ballast when the accident occurred. He did not actually see the accident. He heard no warning from the engine when it was about to move.

Edward Giles, another employee on the siding, said he did not hear any warning given. Cross-examined, witness said when he first saw Magness, he was crawling out from under the truck on his hands and knees. In view of the overhang of the truck, he admitted that a shunter in charge of the train would not have very much chance of seeing the man under the truck.

This completed the case for plaintiffs.

George Scott, a railway driver of 27 years' experience, said he was the driver of the shunting train when the accident happened. They were continually changing trucks on the siding that morning. Twelve trucks were standing in about six different groups, and when they were made up into one train, the Shunter got into the rear truck and gave witness the signal to proceed. Witness sounded his whistle and started the train. He had not moved the train more than two feet when he heard a lot of shouting, and he pulled up instantaneously. He backed a little to get the wheel of the truck off the man's leg. The trucks overhang for about 12 to 16 inches. He had a very good whistle, and had been abused for the noise it made.

Cross-examined, witness said that whilst they were making up the train, he sounded his whistle each time he was about to move the train.

The shunter usually warned the men by going along the train and shouting. Commenting upon the starting of the train, witness said: "Engines are like human beings, they are awkward, sometimes." (Laughter.)

The train moved about a minute after the signal was given.

Arthur Edward Skipper, an employee of the Ely Beet Company, said he was the shunter on the train. When they were making up the train, he warned the men that they were about to pull the train out.

When the train was made-up, he got into one of the last trucks, looked down each side of the train and shouted, "stand clear, we are now going to move." He then signalled to the driver and the train moved about a minute after. He heard the driver blow his whistle.

Thomas Wilkin, a foreman at the Ely factory, spoke of going down to the train on the day of the accident. He gave Scott some instructions, and a moment later, witness was informed of the accident. When Scott started to shunt, witness heard the whistle sounded. This whistle was different to any other there.

Arthur Charles Parks, another foreman, also said that he heard the engine's whistle before the train moved. It could not be confused with any other whistle there. The bag of tools was lying between the rails as Magness was being taken out. The overhang of the trucks varied from 12 to 18 inches.

Victor Stevenson, a timekeeper at the factory, said it was his duty to blow a police-type of whistle at the dinner hour. At the time of the accident, he was waiting to blow his whistle, but could not because of Scott's whistle.

Addressing the jury, Mr. Macaskie submitted that the accident was due to the negligence of Magness in going under the truck, and that there was no negligence on the part of the defendants.

Mr Berryman said he was going to ask the jury to say that the defendants did not take proper care before the train was started.

In view of the evidence of the men who were working near the train and the deceased, and who had said they did not hear the whistle, why should it be said, submitted counsel, that the deceased must have heard the whistle?

The jury found that there was no negligence on the part of the defendants, but that there was contributory negligence on the part of Magness. They therefore found for the defendants.

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River Transport.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, June the 25th, 1926.

During the present season, when their fleet of about 100 barges is not being used for their own purposes, the Ely Beet Sugar Factory is employing these vessels for carrying timber, etc., inland, straight from the steam ships at the docks, several trips have already been made from Lynn Docks, goods being carried as far inland as Earith.

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Sugar Beet Growing.

The Belfast News-Letter, Tuesday, July the 27th, 1926.

The question whether sugar beet growing should be introduced into Ulster is still unsettled, though it has to be said that our Department of Agriculture seems to be unfavourable to it. In England it is different, very different, for according to reports on the coming harvest, the sugar beet is to be the best paying crop of the year. Sir W Beach Thomas, an acknowledged authority, writing in the “Morning Post,” gives account of harvest prospects of crops in the East of England. Not for many years, he says, has so much general hopefulness been seen among farmers. The general note of cheerfulness in and about the Ely district, is due to the really astonishing success of the brand-new sugar factory, which has made money for everyone concerned, from the labourer to the factory owner. They began manufacturing sugar at Ely before the workmen were out of the factory, and there was such zeal in the neighbourhood that enormous areas were grown almost without solicitation.

The area this year is very large, and, to judge by appearances, the crop could scarcely be better. A high yield is promised, and it is already proved that a quality of root containing as much as 17 or 18 percent of sugar could be produced on the land without any very exceptional cultivation. More than that, it is proved, to the hilt by this year's grain crops that sugar beet is the best possible preparation for the crop that succeeds it, remarkably so where the leaves have been ploughed in as green manure. But the outstanding value of the beet as a regenerator of the soil is that it acts as a “subsoiler,” -- It breaks and aerates the soil to a depth of 2 1/2 feet. Testimony like this is worthy of attention, and it is to be hoped that our Farmers Union will take the matter of sugar beet growing up afresh with our agricultural department.

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Second season opening.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, August the 20th, 1926.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory reopens for its second season next month. About 15,000 acres of the crop are under local cultivation to meet the factories requirements, and the crop generally is reported to be excellent.

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Sugar Beet.

The Skegness Standard, Wednesday, August the 25th, 1926.

Growers of Sugar Beet will probably find a number of seeder or bolter beets shewing in the crops at this stage of growth, and in an interview with a prominent Beet Sugar Factory Agriculturist, he pointed out the necessity of removing these seeders as soon as possible. If left in the soil until they become woody, they are of no feeding value to the farmer and no value to the factories for extraction of sugar.

Eastern Counties Sugar Beet.

Ely and Spalding Factories ready for new crop.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory will be reopening for its second season of sugar production next month. The factory has been overhauled. From 14,000 to 16,000 acres are under cultivation, and there is indication of a splendid crop of beet this year.

The factory at Spalding will shortly be opening for its first season. It was not finished in time to deal with last year's crop, although a small quantity of beet was dealt with at the close of the season. In the southern part of Lincolnshire, a large quantity of beet is being grown, and the soil in this district is eminently suitable for the purpose.

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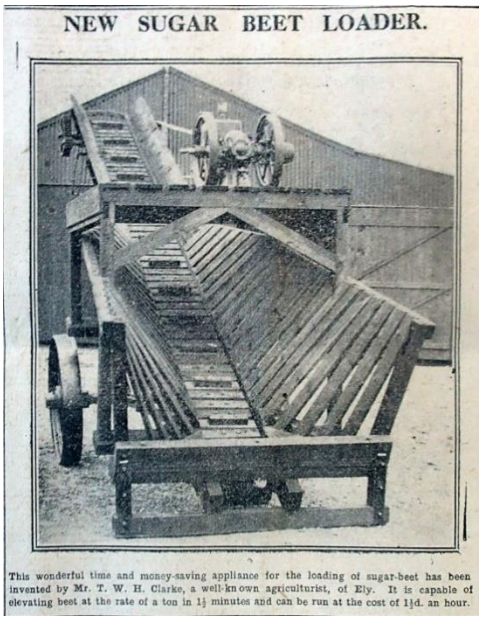
New Sugar Beet Loader.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 17th, 1926.

Photograph below and caption.


NEW SUGAR BEET LOADER.

This wonderful time and money-saving appliance for the loading of sugar-beet has been invented by Mr. T. W. H. Clarke, a well-known agriculturist, of Ely. It is capable of elevating beet at the rate of a ton in 1½ minutes and can be run at the cost of 1½d. an hour.

Caption reads: This wonderful time and money-saving appliance for the loading of sugar-beet has been invented by Mr. T W H Clarke, a well-known agriculturist, of Ely. It is capable of elevating beet at the rate of a ton in one and a half minutes, and can be run at the cost of one and a half-penny an hour.

PATENT SPECIFICATION

257,440

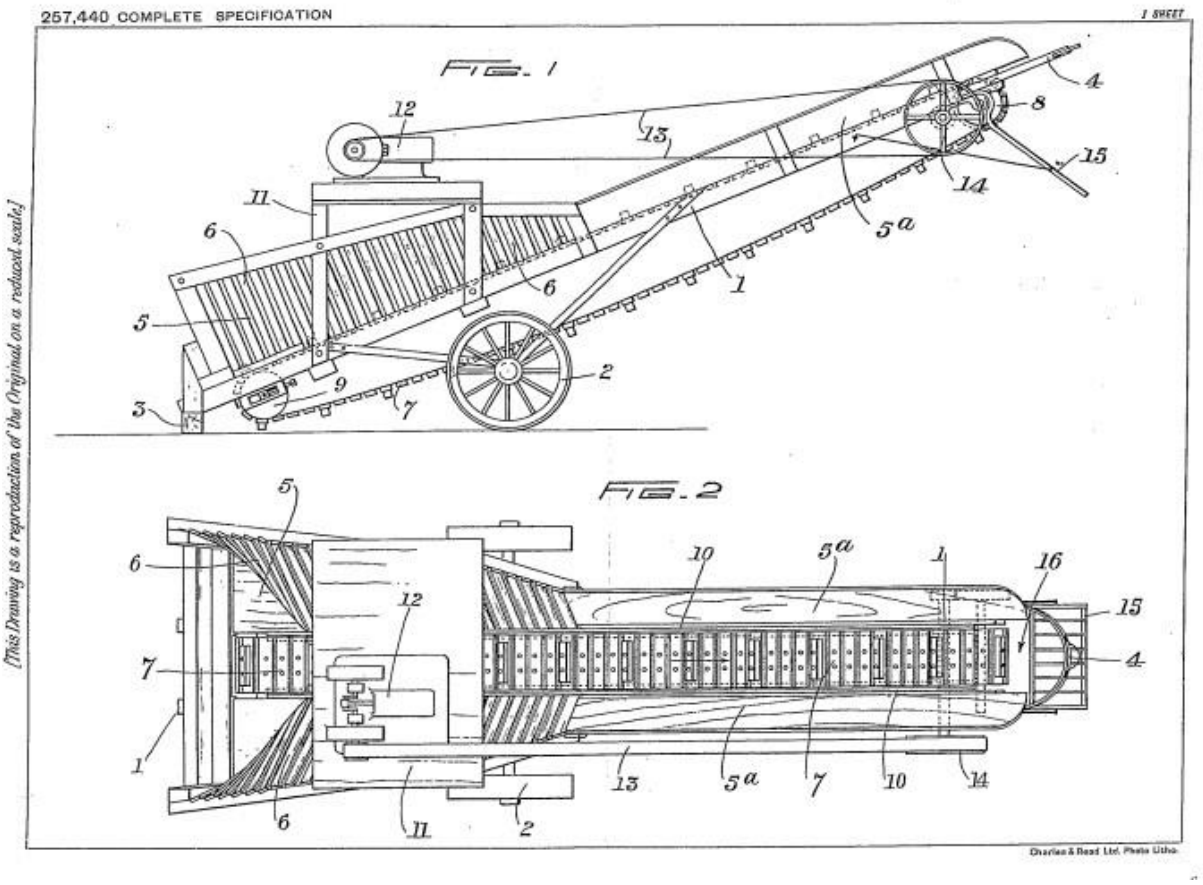
Application Date: Oct. 23, 1925. No. 26,634/25.

Complete Left: July 23, 1926.

Complete Accepted: Sept. 2, 1926.

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION.

Improvements in or relating to Elevators.




Part of the Provisional Specification.

I, Thomas Walter Hugh Clarke, a British subject, of Denmark House, Ely, Cambridgeshire, do hereby declare the nature of this invention to be as follows: –

This invention relates to elevators of the endless band type, in which the band is made of slats and runs upon a framework, usually portable, for the purpose of lifting goods from one position to another, said framework being preferably adjustable in height so that the goods can be delivered at such elevations as may be necessary, say into a lorry, in which case the delivery would probably be in an upward direction, or into a barge, in which event the delivery might be at a lower elevation than that at which the goods are charged on to the elevator.

My improved elevator is designed more particularly for use with root crops and especially beet used for sugar making. The elevator, according to my invention, comprises a suitable framework mounted on land wheels or the equivalent on the axles of which it may be variably inclined with suitable means for supporting it in the position required.

The receiving or hopper end is built largely of bars spaced apart and of substantially V-section, with the conveyor running in the narrower part of the V.

A framework is fitted over, or approximately over the hopper and carries an engine, a belt from which is carried to a pulley at the far or delivery end, and is there adapted to drive a chain wheel, or chain wheels by which the elevator proper is driven.

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J H Ladyman and Company Advertisement.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, October the 8th, 1926.

Advertisement reads:

Support Local Industries and the Firm of J H Ladyman & Company.

We beg to advise our numerous Friends that we have again received the first consignment.

(250 Bags = 25 Tons). English Beet Sugar, manufactured at the Ely Factory.

Give them a good start and purchase some without delay, so that you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are doing something to assist the OLD COUNTRY.

J H Ladyman and Company, Wholesale and retail grocers and Provision Merchants, Kings Lynn. Purveyors of First-Class Goods only.

Support Local Industries and the Firm of

J. H. LADYMAN & Co.

We beg to advise our numerous Friends that we have again received the first consignment

(250 BAGS—25 TONS)

ENGLISH BEET SUGAR,

manufactured at the ELY FACTORY.

Give them a good start and purchase some without delay, so that you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are doing something to assist the OLD COUNTRY.

J. H. Ladyman & Co.,

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL GROCERS AND PROVISION MERCHANTS,

KING'S LYNN.

PURVEYORS OF FIRST-CLASS GOODS ONLY.

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Turning Beet into Sugar.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, October the 15th, 1926.

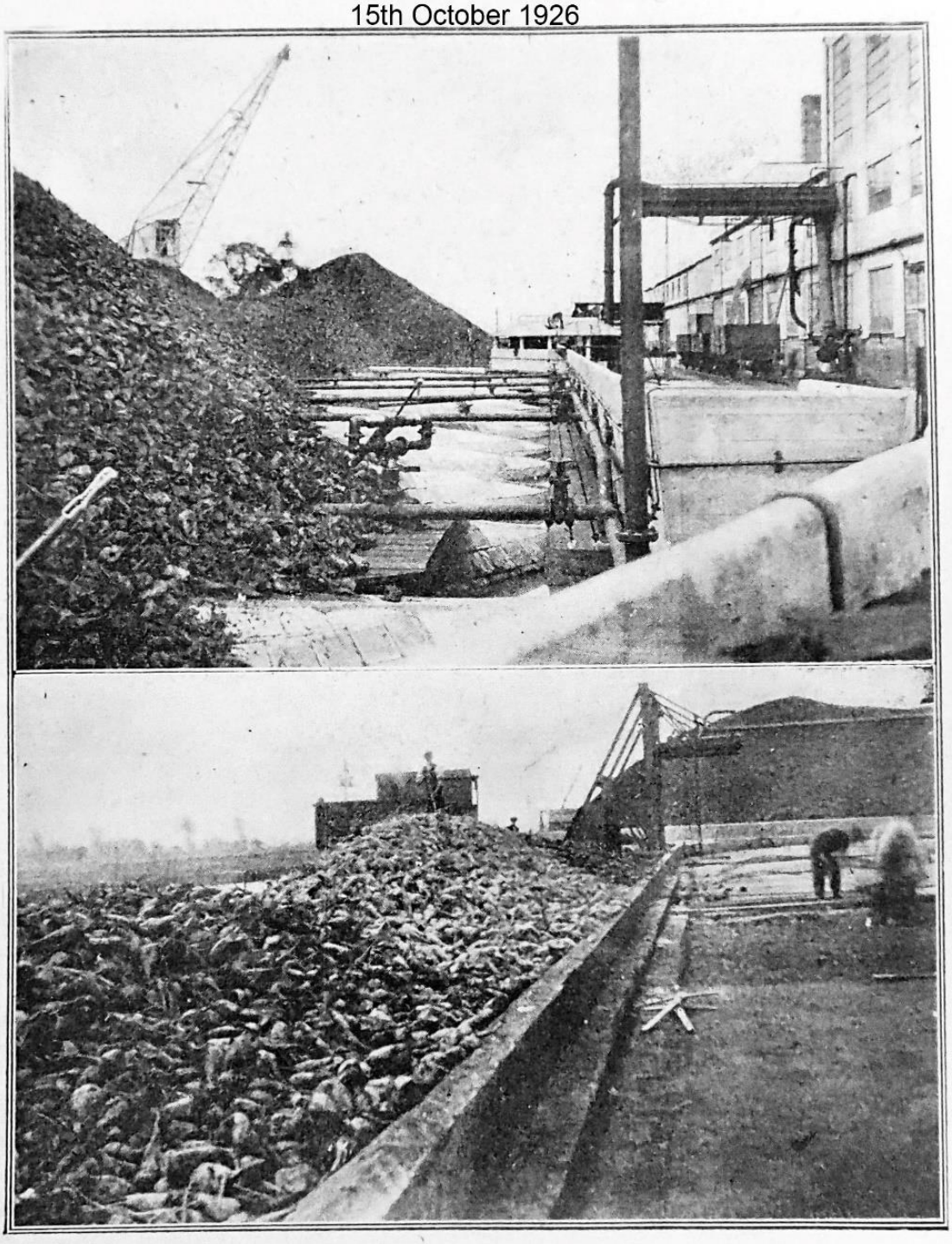
Photograph below and caption.

Caption reads: These hitherto unpublished pictures afford a splendid idea of the thousands of tons of roots at present being taken into the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, where work is now in full swing. In the top picture enormous stacks of beet are seen waiting to be carried from the flumes into the factory to be converted into sugar, and below many tons of beet can be seen in a flume constructed this season.

It is here that horse-drawn vehicles and motor lorries unload beet. This innovation enormously facilitates the important task of unloading.

# TURNING BEET INTO SUGAR.

15th October 1926



Photos] [Starr & Rignall, Ely

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Railway Smash Near Ely.

Trucks derailed and hurled into Signal Box.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 15th, 1926.

Much excitement was caused at Ely early on Sunday morning, when the news spread that a serious railway collision had taken place at the London and North Eastern Railway junction near Adelaide.

From reports, it appears that about midnight on Saturday a goods engine had shunted some trucks into a siding near the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and had then been re-coupled to other trucks, which brought the whole onto the Norwich line. Whether the driver of the engine mistook the signal for the Peterborough fish train to pass through, (which was late), is not at present known, but the stationary engine and trucks made a movement towards the signal box. Rix, the signalman, evidently saw the danger, and with great presence of mind flashed the red light to try and prevent disaster. The fast train, however, could not pull up and struck the trucks with full force. The noise of the impact was heard a long way off. Five or so of the trucks were derailed, and some were turned completely over. Others were forced into the new north junction signal box, demolishing the brickwork and damaging the rods that control the points. In addition to this, the lever wires to connect signals, were also put out of action. The top part of the box also suffered from the impact. On the Peterborough portion of the train, a couple of vans left the rails and dislocated the permanent way to some extent.

S O S signals were immediately sent out, and breakdown gangs from Cambridge and March were soon on the scene of trouble to remove the debris. For about eight hours, single line working was resorted to, and mail trains were delayed from four to six hours. As the signals were out of order, flag men, in all about a dozen, were sent out to signal the passing trains, and avert any further accidents.

The signal box in question has only been in use since the end of February last, as originally a box of wooden construction, a short distance from the present one, was used. Had this been in use at the time of the accident, the results would have been still more serious, as this important junction controls traffic to Norwich, Peterborough, Lynn, Cambridge and London.

The engine of the fish train, which was of the large type, luckily did not leave the line, but it was badly damaged. The signalman in the signal box miraculously escaped injury. There were no casualties.

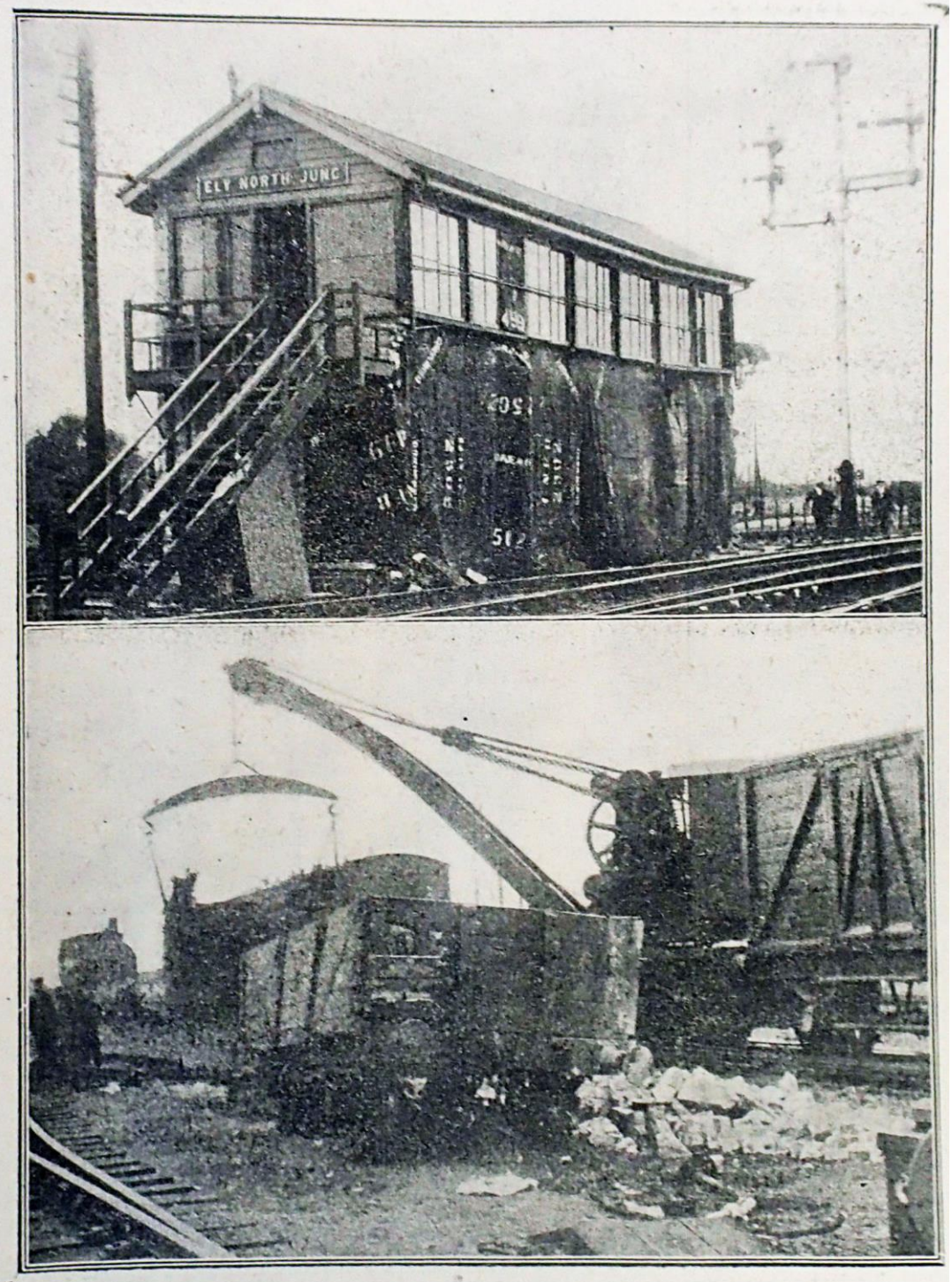
Two photographs and the caption which follows, are taken from a copy of the Cambridgeshire Times, dated Friday, October the 15th, 1926.

Caption reads:

The scene of the railway smash at Ely late on Saturday night is depicted in the above pictures, the top one of which shows the signal-box, through the brickwork of which, two trucks were hurled.

The front, which is covered with tarpaulin, was completely carried away by the force of the impact. In the lower picture are the two trucks, one of which is being lifted clear of the lines on to a railway workshop train. By the side of the truck nearest the camera are some of the bricks which fell in, when the front of the signal-box was demolished.

# ELY RAILWAY SMASH.




Photos] [Starr & Rignall, Ely

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Ely Sugar Factory Breakdown.

Serious delay in Manufacturing caused.

Beet supplies stopped until Monday.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, October the 22nd, 1926.

A serious mechanical breakdown, the most serious to take place since the factory opened, took place about nine o'clock on Tuesday morning, when one of the turbo alternators suddenly failed at the Ely Beet Sugar factory. This left the huge building with only one alternator, and, in view of the fact that through this the supplies of electrical lighting and power are furnished, the seriousness of the breakdown will be fully appreciated.

At the time, the factory was working at full pressure, and, in consequence of the one turbo alternator having to be resorted to, it was necessary to ease the amount of electricity used by cutting down as much as possible the amount of power required.

As soon as the breakdown occurred, engineers were busily engaged in an endeavour to overhaul the machinery, and, later in the day, further trouble was experienced. At about four o'clock in the afternoon, engineers went to start up a reserve gas engine, which runs the Dynamo for the "out of campaign" lighting set. Directly it was started, this also broke down completely.

The effect of this was that the factory was without any reserve lighting for the night. Even with this the troubles did not cease. While arrangements were being made concerning this engine, the one remaining turbo-alternator suddenly "shorted", and, at the same time, threw out a sheet of flame, but happily nothing caught fire, and no one experienced any harm. In consequence of this mishap to the remaining turbo-alternator, the whole of the factory stopped dead.

Lights went out, and everything was at a standstill, even the electrically-driven cranes which are to be seen outside the factory.

After working all day and all night, the engineers succeeded in getting one alternator to work, and in consequence of having to rely upon the one only, the pressure at which the factory is working has had to be materially reduced.

To meet this quite unexpected contingency, communication was immediately established with one of the factories of the group at Ipswich, and here, men working until one o'clock on Wednesday morning dismantling a spare alternator, which they had to send to Ely. This was placed on two large motor lorries, and, after being on the road all night, these reached Ely on Wednesday morning.

Throughout the day, the engineering staff set to work to instal this piece of machinery, but even with this it is difficult to state when the factory will be able to resume work at its full capacity. Sugar is, however, being manufactured at a very slow rate, and this will have to continue until the machinery, which is of British manufacture, is restored to its normal working condition.

Up to the time of the breakdown, supplies of beet had been arriving at the factory in a most satisfactory manner, but, in view of the mishap, it has been found necessary to stop all supplies until Monday.

Circular letter to growers.

Growers have been notified of the breakdown by the following letter, which has been circulated from the factory: –" We are sorry to advise you of a temporary breakdown in our factory, which will necessitate a considerable slowing down of all manufacturing processes for about seven days. Our contractors have responded so loyally to our appeals for plentiful supplies that we have accumulated large stocks of beets in our flumes, in addition to a number of trucks at the moment en route. You will appreciate that, under the circumstances, it is, for a short time, impossible for the factory to take further deliveries, and we much regret, therefore, that, in our mutual interests, we have no option but to place a stoppage on all loading until Monday morning next, the 25th.

Applications for barges already submitted will be dealt with as soon as possible. Barges already placed, will be collected as soon as loaded. No fresh orders for barges can be accepted until the factory resumes normal working. We need hardly record how much we deplore the necessity of temporarily stopping deliveries, but feel sure we may rely upon a continuance of that co-operation of our growers which has been so marked and so much appreciated by ourselves."

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Daily Record.

The Lynn News and County Press, Tuesday, October the 26th, 1926.

During the early part of this week at the Ely Sugar-Beet factory, a load of 1,850 tons was "worked" in 24 hours, which was a record for the factory.

***

Beet by Water Transport.

Ely Factory's 7 Tugs and100 Barges.

The Pride of the River.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, November the 5th, 1926.

In ancient times, the Monks of Ely brought up their great barrels of wine from Kings Lynn by barge, and landed them at the same place where now the Ely Beet Sugar Factory's fine fleet of tugs and barges nightly discharge hundreds of tons of sugar beet for the greedy consumption of the complex mass of machinery which rapidly turns it into sugar of the finest quality. No doubt the old Monks' wine was fine stuff, but seldom did it ever cheer other folk than those laboured by the vast Monastery, whereas this home-grown sugar of today is eventually dispersed all over the country to nourish and please a great number of people. So, as the student of history knows, the "good old times" really were not so very good after all in this, or any other respect, when compared with the present.

If any of the citizens of Ely wish to see the fleet in action, they must take up a position on Adelaide Bridge either early or late, for the tugs collect their barges and generally start off before seven in the morning and in some cases, do not get back again with their heavy loads

till after 10 at night. The rhythmic pomp, pomp, pomp, of the tug's engines must have become a well-known sound to many an isolated water side homestead on the far-flung fenlands, for the Old West, Cam, Burwell, Lark, Little Ouse, Great Ouse, Wissey, Hundred Foot, Old Bedford, Forty Foot, and Sixteen Foot waterways, all provide their quota of waterborne sugar-beet for the Ely factory.

Not all the tugs work to and from Ely. There are depots at both Brandon Creek and Denver Sluice, where the tugs on those "rounds" hand over their full barges to the main river tug, and lay up for the night till a fresh supply of empty barges are brought to them in the morning. The main river tug, "Ely E", commanded by a well-known fen waterman, is certainly the pride of the river. Probably the biggest and most powerful tug that has ever navigated on these waters, she makes light work of as many as 25 fully loaded barges towing upstream. On one occasion, not so many nights ago, "Ely E" came in with a fine gang of barges, the last of which was still under Adelaide Bridge, when she, herself, was well abreast of the factory's quay. The fleet this season consists of seven tugs and 100 barges.

The possibility of ice, or floods, or engine breakdown, is the nightmare which forever haunts the water transport office. Then there are the energetic, or misguided, growers who never read their contract, but lift the crop all in one fell swoop, and wish to load barge after barge till it is all gone in a few days. Such good people seem to be smitten with this desire all at the same time, so that, were the fleet twice as large, it would not be able to cope with the demand for barges that, under these circumstances, may flood the water transport office all in the course of one fine day or week.

"After all," murmurs the water transport office, "can you, dear sirs, demand railway trucks from the great railway companies just when and how you wish? Remember, those trucks hold only seven tons and come only to your nearest railway station, and how far that often is? Whereas our barges hold 20 tons or more, and are brought almost alongside your fields. Give us our due, give us a chance." But these murmurs soon fade away, for there is not much time for indulging even them during the campaign.

"Pomp, pomp, pomp," go the tug engines bringing, it is hoped, cheap and convenient transport to the farmers, and taking away a produce, which, for them, is surely golden, this bad harvest year.

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Accidents at Ely.

Fitter's arm crushed in machinery and amputated.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, November the 26th, 1926.

On Sunday morning, Mr. Bertie William Dewey, (29), of 1, Chiefs-lane, Ely, employed as a fitter at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, had his right arm accidentally caught in the machinery. Upon extrication, Dewey's arm was found to be severely injured, the tendons being broken and the flesh torn away. He was taken to the first aid shed, and Doctor Davis summoned. Doctor Davis ordered the injured man's removal to hospital, and accompanied him in the ambulance to Addenbrooke's. The arm was subsequently amputated. On inquiry yesterday, (Thursday), we were informed that Dewey is going on well.

An accident, (happily of a less serious nature), also occurred at the Factory on Sunday afternoon when two labourers employed on the first presses came into contact with a machine bar which slipped. One man, (William Ernest Cooper, of 23, Willow-walk, Ely), fell with his

hand under the bar, the pressure of which damaged the fingers. First aid was rendered, and Cooper's hand is now progressing favourably.

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Factory Construction.

Housing a New Industry.

The Westminster Gazette, Tuesday, December the 7th, 1926.

Every new industry provides a fresh problem for the architect and engineer, whose business it is to see that the various processes are most efficiently housed and arranged. One of the more recent British industries is the extraction and refinement of sugar from beet. Various attempts have been made in the past to establish this as a home industry, and to encourage the growth of sugar beet in this country, but it was not until 1911 that the first factory was built, --at Cantley, in Norfolk. The Great War prevented any further development, but in 1921, Home Grown Sugar, Limited, with the assistance of the Government, built a factory at Kelham. The farmer is beginning to realise the advantages of growing the sugar beet, against which there was at first considerable prejudice, and experience has taught him how the yield and sugar content can be increased by the right methods of cultivation. The result is that in East Anglia, at any rate, the industry is now firmly established, several factories are already at work and orders have been placed for more. Two of the most up-to-date of these factories are those built for the Anglo-Dutch group, who were the pioneers of the industry in this country, at Ely, and at Ipswich. Both are planned on a large scale, and produce an output of about 150 tons of sugar daily. They are equally well placed as regards transport by rail, road, and canal, and as in each case, a large area of land was available, there was nothing to cramp or confine the designer as regards the lay-out on the site.

Factory design.

It has been laid down that, in its essentials, a factory building is merely a structure designed to afford protection and covering to the various processes which and industry entails, to support the machinery at the required levels, and to provide the necessary relationship and connexion between the various steps in the production of the specific product. It will not pretend to any architectural distinction, or to conceal its real purpose. It's fitness and efficiency for that real purpose will be its true criterion. A factory is well designed when the percentage cost of the necessary standing charges, –labour, power, and heat, --is reduced to the minimum consistent with efficiency. As these are the main items which regulate the cost of manufacture, they are the things which will especially influence the architect in his design. To put the matter briefly, the standing charges are affected by the interests on capital sunk in the buildings and plant, and the charges for insurance and upkeep: and labour, by the arrangement of the various departments, facilities for unloading and handling goods, absence of columns and obstructions, wide passages and hygienic conditions for the worker.

A Sugar Beet Factory.

In the factory at Ipswich, Mr. Hal Williams, the well-known factory architect, may fairly claim to have provided all these essentials. With the contractors working under his direction, he has also established something of a record in speedy construction. Building operations were started in March, 1925, on an absolutely virgin site, yet the factory was complete and making sugar by the end of October. The factory site is conveniently placed for transport, being about a mile and a half from the important railway junction at Ipswich. it covers 33 acres, and has

entailed the laying down of 4 1/2 miles of sidings. The main building is 406 feet long and is 45 feet high to the eaves. Placed around it are five detached buildings, which provide the pulp-drying rooms, store houses, and offices. An interesting feature of the subsidiary buildings is that they are entirely of timber, on colonial lines. The speedy and successful construction of this large and important group of buildings, in the short space of six months, reflects great credit on the architects and engineers, more particularly, as owing to the little time available for the preparation of drawings, the bulk of the work had to be carried out by direct administration under their supervision.

The site of the Ely factory is a particularly favourable one. It is one and a half miles from Ely station, at the junction of a number of railway lines. The total area of the factory site is 66 acres. Four miles of railway sidings have been installed to deal with the beet traffic, and silos covering an area of 50,000 square feet have been constructed for the receipt of beets, which come in by rail, road and water.

For the reception of the water-borne beet, and for other purposes, a wharf, 650 feet in length has been built, with the depth of water sufficient to accommodate the largest barges which can be used on the river. The company possesses its own fleet of barges and claims, that one of its services to the district is an organised attempt to restore the use of some of the waterways with which England abounds.

The area covered by the factory buildings is two, and a quarter acre, and the building cube of the various buildings reaches the enormous figure of 5,179,000 cubic feet. The main building is 360 feet long by 82 feet wide and is 52 feet high to the eaves.

Messrs. Hal Williams and Company specialise in the designing of large factories and warehouses, and have been responsible for many of the large works erected in this country during the last 25 years. As they are mechanical and electrical engineers as well as architects, they are able to appreciate, advise upon, and allow for the working needs of the business for which the buildings are designed, and also to attend to the mechanical and electrical side of the work.

A recent example of their work which also appears on this page, is the new building which the HJ Heinz Company, Limited have just erected on land lying between the Grand Junction Canal, and the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, at Harlesden, in North London. This is the first of a series which the firm are planning.

Built of brick on modern lines, it is for the main part a one-storey building. Where there are two stories, the second floor is used for those products in which gravity is employed in the process of manufacture. Ample grounds have been set aside as sports grounds for employees, and plenty of provision has been made for extensions.

This building is the work of Mr E H Burgess, a contractor of wide experience of many forms of construction.

## Building notes.

All the painting at the Ipswich factory is the work of Messrs. Vigor and Company, (Poplar), Limited, the well-known reconstruction contractors.

Among the firms responsible for the constructional work in connexion with the new beet sugar factories were Messrs. Robert Stephenson and Son, Limited, of Burwell, Cambs, of whose special brand of Portland cement, some hundreds of tons were used in the building of the Ely factory. It was for this, and the Ipswich sugar beet factory, that Messrs. Cartwright and Company, of Elmswell, Suffolk, were the contractors, responsible for the requisite sectional

buildings, offices, store buildings and living accommodation. Messrs. John Wainwright and Company Limited., the well-known quarry proprietors, of Shepton Mallet and London, who specialise in tar limestone and slag macadam and limestone tar paving, were the contractors for all the roads at the Heinz factory.

All the boilers at the Heinz factory were supplied by Messrs. H and T Danks, Limited, who make a speciality of large factory boilers of all descriptions, as well as boilers for heating systems.

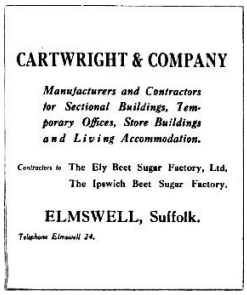
The whole contracts for the asbestos-cement roofing and walling for Kelham, Ely, and Ipswich factories were in the hands of the Asbestos Roofing Company, the well-known roofing contractors of Kingsway.

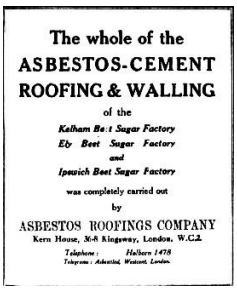
The wood block floors at Ely, Ipswich, and in the Heinz, factories were the work of Messrs. Hollis Brothers, who have been the flooring contractors in many of London's largest buildings.

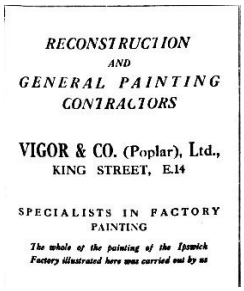
Factory at Peterborough.

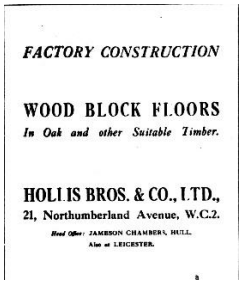
The Peterborough Sugar factory for the Central Sugar Company, is built in brick supplied by the London Brick Company and Forders Limited, which material has been used through the ages as the basis of industrial building. The London Brick Company are, too, responsible for the brick in many other sugar factories, as well as the very many buildings of every description throughout the country.

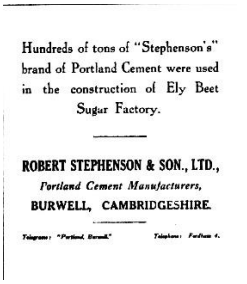
Advertisements for the Company's mentioned above follows below. They are The London Brick Company, and Forders Limited, supplying Fletton bricks, Cartwright and Company, supplying sectional buildings, Asbestos Roofing Company, supplying Asbestos-Cement roofing and walling, Vigor and Company, Specialists in factory painting, Hollis Brothers and Company, supplying Wood block flooring, Robert Stephenson and Son, Limited, supplying Portland Cement, H & T Danks, supplying boilers, John Wainwright and Company Limited, supplying Tar Limestone and Slag-Macadam, and Limestone Tar Paving.


CARTWRIGHT & COMPANY
Manufacturers and Contractors for Sectional Buildings, Temporary Offices, Store Buildings and Living Accommodation.
Contractors to The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ltd, The Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory.
ELMSWELL, Suffolk.
Telephone Elmswell 24.





RECONSTRUCTION
AND
GENERAL PAINTING
CONTRACTORS
VIGOR & CO. (Poplar), Ltd.,
KING STREET, E.14
SPECIALISTS IN FACTORY PAINTING
The whole of the painting of the Ipswich Factory illustrated here was carried out by us


FACTORY CONSTRUCTION
WOOD BLOCK FLOORS
In Oak and other Suitable Timber.
HOLLIS BROS. & CO., LTD.,
21, Northumberland Avenue, W.C.2.
Head Office: JAMESON CHAMBERS, HULL.
Also at LEICESTER.


Hundreds of tons of "Stephenson's" brand of Portland Cement were used in the construction of Ely Beet Sugar Factory.
ROBERT STEPHENSON & SON., LTD.,
Portland Cement Manufacturers,
BURWELL, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.
Telegrams: "Portland, Burwell." Telephone: Fordham 4.

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English Sugar for The Home Table.

Banbury farmers' visit Kidderminster Factory.

The Banbury Guardian, Thursday, January the 27th, 1927.

Since the beet sugar industry was inaugurated in this country a comparatively short time ago, it has made rapid progress. The acreage has gone up by leaps and bounds in all districts as the crop has become better known amongst farmers, and Oxfordshire has not lagged behind other parts in this respect.

The county branch of the Farmers' Union has availed itself of every opportunity of popularising sugar beet, which is about the only arable crop that is shown any semblance of a profit during the past year or two. The consequences that several hundred acres of sugar producing beet were grown in the country for the "campaign" which is about to terminate.

The sugar beet crop is better known and more widely cultivated on the Continent than it is with us. We have not had the advantage, as it were, of the dictatorial action of Napoleon, who in 1811, compelled farmers to grow 80,000 acres of sugar beet and prohibited the importation of sugar from cane.

We have moved on different lines, and the new industry owes much to the indefatigable work that was put in by the Earl of Denbigh, as chairman of the National Sugar Beet Association, Colonel Courthope, Member of Parliament, and others.

They ploughed a lonely furrow for some time. The war taught the nation many things, and one of them was the great possibilities in regard to home produced sugar. The Cantley factory had been operating in Norfolk for a few years and its ramifications spread, and other organisations were created for the erection of factories in various parts of the country.

This season, no fewer than twelve factories have been slicing sugar beet, situated at Cantley, Kelham, Ipswich, Ely, Colwick, Kidderminster, Bury, Wissington, Spalding, Felstead, Poppleton and Peterborough, the last four operating for the first time this year. Proposals are under consideration for the erection of factories in other parts of the country, and it is sincerely hoped by growers in this district, that the near future, will see one situated in Oxfordshire.

Farmers in the district have had two years' experience in the cultivation of beet, but very few have had any first-hand knowledge as to the methods adopted in dealing with their beet, when the crop arrived at the factory. In order that they might have, Mr F W Young, of Broughton, who has been an enthusiastic grower since the first season, that beet was included in Oxfordshire farmers rotations, organised a trip to the Kidderminster factory, which is operated by the Anglo Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, of which Lord Weir, of steel house fame, is the chairman.

Mr. Young was ably assisted in the arrangement of the trip by Mr C E Dunning, of Minster Lovell, the representative of the factory in Oxfordshire. A party of about thirty left Banbury on Monday by a Midland Motor bus, and although the wintry conditions in the morning made what would ordinarily be a long journey, even more tedious, every member of the party spent a very instructive day.

Hardly anyone had any conception of the huge factory, with its numerous railway sidings for the reception of the beet, and its own railway engines, or the complicated machinery involved in the manufacture of home-produced sugar. All voted it about the most interesting tour, in which they had participated from Oxfordshire.

When the beet arrives by railway or road, it is tipped after samples have been taken to ascertain sugar content, percentage of dirt etc, into the flumes, which are like huge concrete bins several hundred feet long and about thirty feet wide. At the bottom is a channel with the width and depth of about two feet, in which water runs and carries the beet to the factory. It is elevated into a mechanical washer and is then hoisted up to the top of the building, where it is automatically weighed, thus providing an account of the tonnage dealt with.

The beet then passes to the slicing machines, and the pulp subsequently goes into the diffusers, which extract the sugar, hot juice and water being forced into them. The hot juice is run from one diffuser to another, and after going the whole round of the battery, is drawn off and conveyed into strainers.

It passes through three processes of purification with lime and sulphur. Evaporation follows, and subsequent boiling bring the juice to a condition known as “massecuite”, –sugar with molasses clinging to it. By centrifugal action, the molasses are thrown off, the sugar is dried, cooled, and blown. The sugar passes down to the final operation of bagging, in one and two hundredweight lots.

It is impossible to give a full description of the methods of manufacture, but needless to say, an extensive installation of machinery, from washing machines to lime kilns, for producing the lime milk for purification purposes is required. Every beet grower should take the first opportunity of visiting a factory, to see exactly how his beet is dealt with. Naturally, every grower in the party was keenly interested in the method of weighing, deducting dirt percentages, etc.

A representative of the Farmers Union was found in the tare-house checking these operations, and also the analysis for sugar content. While going round the factory at Kidderminster, a farmer was encountered who grew 25 acres of beet the first year, 75 the 2nd, and 100 this season. He was prepared to grow 200, but the requirements had been met. Still, he has not 6 shillings per ton railway freightage to pay. The highest sugar content this season was 23.1 percent, and the biggest deduction for dirt, 70 pounds per hundredweight. The visitors were impressed with the need for correct topping. All improperly top beet is re-topped at the factory.

Mr. Young presided at a tea at the Black Horse Hotel, and expressed the thanks of the visitors to Mr Mockett for showing them round the factory. What they had seen had greatly enlightened them, and would leave them, who had hitherto been in the dark, more satisfied in future. He also thanked Mr Dunning for the trouble he had taken in assisting with the arrangements.

Mr Mockett said they were pleased to see growers at the factory. They desired that they should know what happened there, and hoped they had got the cooperative spirit between factory and growers, which must exist. In the Oxfordshire district, the factory was well represented by Mr Dunning, and he would assist the farmers whenever he was called upon to do so.

Lord Weir, the chairman of the company, had already six factories, and would probably have others, but he would not have any more this year. They had explored various districts, one of which was Oxfordshire, and it was unfortunate there was no factory there. To those prepared to increase their acreages this year, the company was prepared to give special contract terms. The price to those growers would be the same as that under their present contracts, but it would be stipulated that they must deliver their beet in January and February out of the clamp.

The clamps would be passed by the representative of the factory, and the grower would receive 2 shillings, and 6 pence per ton for clamping. They had had clamps of beet at the factory for six weeks, and the average sugar content of the beet from those clamps, was the same as that for beet which had been delivered to the factory during the past six weeks.

It was very important where growers clamp beet, that it should be properly topped, to prevent it sprouting and losing sugar content. New growers would receive 51 shillings per ton, instead of 54 shillings per ton, to old growers, together with the additional 2 shillings and sixpence per ton for clamping. He could give them no idea as to the price after the subsidy expired, but it would be a paying price to the grower.

He considered beet would keep well in clamp, covered with the tops only, 18 inches at base and six inches at top. They must not use straw, which would find its way into the machines and do damage. He advised growers to get beet up, as soon as it was ripe, and so avoid the second growth, and loss of sugar content. If a grower dispatched any beet to the factory which he thought had been frosted, he should notify them at once.

Mr H.W. Stilgoe expressed they're thanks to Mr. Young for arranging the trip. He had been to a lot of trouble, but everyone had been intensely interested. Mr. Young, briefly replied.

The party reached Banbury about eight o'clock, after one of the most interesting trips taken by agriculturists for a long time.

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Ely Beet Sugar.

Trading profit of £307,540 for the year.

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Tuesday, June the 21st, 1927.

The accounts of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, for the year ended March, show a profit on trading of £307,540, after providing for all charges, debenture interest, income-tax, and depreciation on the company's factory and other capital assets, and after transferring £60,423 to general reserve, there remains a net profit of £56,250. The directors propose a dividend on the Ordinary of twelve and a half percent, free of tax.

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Company meetings.

The Anglo-Dutch Group of Beet Sugar Factories.

All-Round Improvement.

English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

Factories a National Asset.

The Yorkshire Post, Saturday, June the 25th, 1927.

The third annual general meeting of the English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, was held on Thursday, at 6, Lancaster Place, Strand, WC2.

Mr. J Crosland Graham, (Chairman of the company) presided.

The secretary, Mr Alfred Wood, having read the notice convening the meeting, and the auditor’s report.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts said: --

As stated in the report, the company's factory at Cantley has worked satisfactorily during the past manufacturing season. In the season of 1925, 127,319 tons of beets were worked. Last season we worked 161,841 tons of beet, or an increase of 27 percent. Our average daily tonnage passed through the factory was 1,383 tons per day. As this represented the present capacity of the factory, further sums are being expended this year to increase its capacity to 200,000 tons.

We received beets grown on 21,820 acres, supplied by 2,936 growers. The corresponding figures for the previous year were 2,344 growers and 15,897 acres. The average sugar content of the beets received was 18.05 percent, against 16.73 percent in 1925. In the year covered by the accounts, £600,848 was paid to the growers for their beets, at an average price of 61 shillings and 9 pence per net ton. In 1925, the corresponding figure was £373,871, and the average price was 57 shillings, and 3 pence per ton.

The profit on trading is £306,949, compared with £184,058 in 1925. These satisfactory results must be attributed to the better quality of the beet crop, and the improved prices obtained for sugar produced. The directors here would wish to thank their growers, many of whom have grown for them for many years, for their continued support and cooperation.

Kelham Factory.

The company's share of profit from the working of the Kelham factory of Home-Grown Sugar, Limited, under the working agreement, is £68,147, as compared with £22,677 the previous year. This increased profit is attributable to the same causes set out above, although this Company’s share has been 30 percent instead of 35 percent the previous year. The interest on current balances and dividends upon shares and Debentures in allied companies, show an increase of £2,000 upon the previous year.

After providing for all charges, including depreciation and income tax, there is a balance of £246,168, of which £156,067 has been appropriated to general reserve. The balance of £90,101, the directors propose to apply to the payment of dividend upon the Preference and Ordinary shares of 20 percent free of tax. In deciding to make this proposal to you, your director's have had in mind the long years during which the shareholders obtained no return upon their capital, and during which they cheerfully found whatever funds were necessary to keep the business alive.

I desire to call your special attention to the manner in which your company is consolidating its position, and to the conservative nature of its finance. Thus, you will note that an amount equal to 60 percent of the issued share capital has been placed to general reserve, and that depreciation on plant and buildings has already amounted to £143,691, or about 30 percent of their original value.

It is the intention of your directors to maintain and augment those exceptional provisions rigorously, and without hesitation, so that as the subsidy decreases, your Company will be in the best possible position to meet the competition of the world's markets.

Your directors take it that, in the exceptional conditions governing the industry, they have special duties to perform towards the public and to Parliament. They have to show that beet sugar factories, equipped and managed with skill, knowledge, and business ability, are a national asset of particular value, and that the savings of the people may safely be invested

in them. They have also to provide the British farmer with an outlet for one valuable crop, the price of which is assured to him, subject to the ordinary climatic risks of his trade, from the moment that he sows his seed. Your directors have these obligations constantly in mind. The results so far achieved, show that they and you, may face the future with a reasoned confidence. I cannot conclude without referring to the able services of the factory staff during a strenuous and difficult campaign, and I would wish at the same time to thank my co-directors and the secretary for their continued cooperation and support. The report and accounts were adopted.

## The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

### Repayment of Debentures in Full.

The third annual general meeting of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, was held on Friday at 6, Lancaster Place, Strand, WC2.
Sir James Martin, (Chairman of the company) presided,
The Secretary (Mr Alfred Wood), having read the notice convening the meeting and the auditor's report,

The Chairman in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said: --

As stated in the report, the Company's factory at Ely has worked satisfactorily during its second manufacturing season. In 1925, the year the factory was built, 80,179 tons of sugar beet were worked. This last season we worked 188,800 tons, or an increase of 135 percent. Our average throughout was 1,764 tons per day. We received beet grown on 17,637 acres, supplied by 2,531 growers. The corresponding figures for the previous year were 1,179 growers, and 5,941 acres. The average sugar content of the beet received was 16.17, against 15.27 percent in 1925.

In the year covered by the accounts, £489,734 was paid to the growers for their beet, at an average price of 57 shillings and one penny per net ton, or 11 shillings 5 pence per ton in excess of the statutory minimum. In consequence of the increasing use of the waterways surrounding the factory, the Company's fleet of barges and tugs was increased during the year from 48 to 90. The directors are glad to acknowledge the cooperation of the growers in securing this considerable extension of the company's business.

The profit on trading is £307,540, compared with £83,339 in 1925. The shareholders will note that after providing for all charges for Debenture and other interest, and for income tax, there is a balance of £215,308. Of this sum of £98,634 has been appropriated to the depreciation of the Company's factory, and other capital assets, and £60,424 is transferred to general reserve, leaving a balance remaining of £56,250, which the Director's propose to apply to the payment of dividend upon the ordinary shares of 12 ½ percent free of tax.

It will be remembered that on the date of the previous year's accounts, the issued share capital was £250,000. Debentures for £100,000 had also been issued, and there was a further unsecured cash liability outstanding of £221,115. Since then, a further £200,000 in fully paid shares has been issued to the general public at 23 shillings per share, and the premium on this issue now appears in the Capital Reserve account. This has enabled the unsecured loan to be repaid.

The shareholders will also have observed the statement in the report that subsequent to the date of the present accounts that the Debentures have been repaid in full. Realisations of the stocks of sugar shown in the balance sheet have allowed for this discharge, and also for the repayment in full, of the temporary bank loan of £165,000 shown among the liabilities.

## Financial Strength.

These transactions, which have greatly contributed to the financial strength of the Company, could not have been carried through except with the most loyal and effective cooperation of our Dutch colleagues and the sugar interests they represent, and on behalf of the English members of the Board, I feel it only right publicly, to express our acknowledgment.

I also wish to thank my colleagues as a whole, and the Secretary for their constant support in a year involving decisions of special responsibility. I also record with appreciation, the able assistance of the factory management and the men under their direction and instruction.

In the ordinary way, my duty as Chairman would have been discharged by the statement I have already made, but my colleagues and I recognise that through State intervention in this industry we have a wider responsibility.

I should like, therefore, in a few words, to point out what the Ely factory has accomplished during its first two seasons. Not far short of three quarters of a million pounds have been paid to the growers of beet. Nearly one hundred thousand pounds have been paid in salaries and wages, excluding the remuneration of the directors.

Several hundred thousand tons of material, including beet and sugar, have been carried on the railways on behalf of the factory. In addition, we have brought into use some of the neglected waterways of our country, the restoration of which has been a subject of discussion, to my knowledge for the past forty years, with small practical results. I submit with confidence that the record of this factory justifies the goodwill of the State towards the industry.

With regard to financial responsibility, the operations of our factory have demanded the command of capital of not less than three quarters of a million pounds sterling. While the profits for the past season owing to a favourable harvest and a steady sugar market have been satisfactory, it must not be forgotten that the factory and the farmers combined have to contend against nature in unfavourable seasons, and the factory alone has to bear the risk of a falling sugar market.

The directors have wisely devoted the main portion of the profits to the writing down of the cost of the factory, and the creation of a substantial reserve, this being in accordance with the policy which was foreshadowed when the subsidy was given to the industry, to enable it satisfactorily to compete in days to come, when the subsidy declines, and when the factory may have to meet conditions which cannot be foreseen but which, as prudent men of business, we must provide against. The report and accounts were adopted.

## The Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

### Effect of Approaching Decline of Subsidy.

The third Annual general meeting of the Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, was held on Friday at 6, Lancaster Place, Strand, WC2.

Sir G.L. Courthope, Member of Parliament, (Chairman of the Company), presided.
The secretary, (Mr Alfred Wood), having read the notice convening the meeting, and the auditor’s report,

The Chairman in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said: --

As stated in the report, the Company's factory at Ipswich has worked satisfactorily during its second manufacturing season. In 1925, the year the factory was built, 21,088 tons of sugar beet were worked, the factory being closed before the end of the season on account of the irregularity of deliveries by reason of frost. The remaining beets being sent to other factories for working.

This last season we worked a full campaign of 137,966 tons of beets. Our average throughout was 1,179 tons per day. We received beet grown on 8,856 acres, supplied by 944 growers, and in addition the Company accepted 6,393 acres from 1,597 growers for the Yeovil Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, a Company formed for the promotion of a factory in the West of England.

Corresponding figures for the previous year were 4,059 acres and 658 growers, with 793 acres grown by 293 growers for the Yeovil Company. The average sugar content of the beets received was 18.05 percent against 17.43 percent in 1925. In the year covered by the accounts, £409,593 was paid to the growers for their beets, at an average price of 62 shillings per net ton. In 1925, the corresponding figure was £100,169, at an average price of 53 shillings, 11 pence per ton.

The profit on trading is £287,232, compared with £43,808 in 1925. The better quality of the beet crop, the smoother running of the factory, and its ability to operate at a greater capacity, by reason of a larger supply of raw material, together with the improved prices obtained for sugar produced have been the principal factors combining to secure the satisfactory results shown.
The directors realised with appreciation, the cooperation of the growers, and the confidence they have shown in the desire of the Company to be a real service to them.

The shareholders will note that, after providing for all charges, for Debenture, and for other interest, and for income tax, there is a balance of £213,504. Of this sum, £96,112 has been appropriated to the depreciation of the Company's factory and other capital assets, and £67,392 is transferred to general reserve, leaving a balance remaining of £50,000. This the directors proposed to apply to the payment of dividends on the Ordinary shares of twelve and a half percent, free of tax.

The factory and other capital assets of the Company, which have cost to date £500,405, now stand in the balance sheet of £400,324, or 80 percent of their cost. The reserves are now increased to £91,334, representing 23 percent of the company's issued capital of £400,000.

## Unsecured Loan Repaid.

It will be remembered that on the date of the previous year’s accounts, the issued share capital was £250,000. Debentures for £100,000 had been issued, and there was a further unsecured cash liability outstanding of £170,097.

During the year, a further £150,000 in fully paid shares has been issued to the general public at 23 shillings per share. It will be observed that the premium on this issue is shown in the capital reserve account. Funds were thus obtained by the Company, by which the unsecured loan was repaid in full.

The shareholders will also observe a statement in the report, that since the date of the present accounts the Debentures have also been repaid in full. The realisation of part of the stocks of sugar shown in the balance sheet, has enabled your directors to discharge the Debentures and also to repay in full the temporary bank loan of £43,000 shown among the liabilities.

The Company is greatly indebted to our Dutch colleagues and their friends for their cooperation in carrying through these important financial transactions. I am personally indebted to all my colleagues and the Secretary, for their constant assistance and support throughout the year. We also greatly appreciate the valuable services, so willingly given in the strenuous work of the manufacturing season, by our factory officers and their staff.

In conclusion, may I point out that the year under review is the third of the four years under the highest scale of the subsidy given under the British Sugar (Subsidy) Act. During the current year, our policy will be to continue the consolidation of our financial position by the writing down of our capital assets, and by the strengthening of our reserves.

The directors have no fear that the declining rate of subsidy will, in these circumstances, necessarily have a serious effect upon the beet sugar industry, which has saved so many farmers from financial disaster. It is true, that the reduction after this season will be relatively substantial, but provided that the factory and the farmer share equitably in the fall of the subsidy, there is no reason for any loss of confidence, either in this Company or in the industry generally.

Investors may feel satisfied that, so far as this Company is concerned, –and I am sure that it is the policy of all the factories, –there will be continual attempt to accumulate experience and reduce costs at a rate which, with the cooperation of the grower on similar lines, may adequately meet the decline, and ultimately the cessation of the charge against the taxpayer, which he has accepted in order that British agriculture may find in this industry a new hope for the future. The report and accounts were adopted.

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The Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited.

Satisfactory results of the year’s working.

The Peterborough & Hunts Standard, Friday, July the 1st, 1927.

The third annual general meeting of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, was held on Friday (Sir James Martin, chairman).

The chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, said the company's factory at Ely had worked satisfactorily during its second manufacturing season. In 1925, the year the factory was built, 80,179 tons of sugar beet were worked.

This last season they worked 188,800 tons, an average throughput of 1,764 tons per day. They received beet grown on 17,637 acres, supplied by 2,531 growers. The average sugar content of the beet received was 16.17, against 15.27 percent in 1925.

In the year covered by the accounts, £489,734 was paid to the growers for their beet, at an average price of 57 shillings and 1 penny per net ton, or 11 shillings and 5 pence per ton in excess of the statutory minimum.

The profit on trading was £307,540, compared with £83,339 in 1925, and after providing for all charges for debenture and other interest, and for income-tax, there was a balance of £215,308. Of this sum £98,634 had been appropriated to the depreciation of the Company's factory and other capital assets, and £60,424 was transferred to general reserve, leaving a balance remaining of £56,250, which the director's proposed to apply to the payment of dividend upon the ordinary shares of twelve and a half percent, free of tax.

Subsequent to the date of the present accounts, the debentures had been repaid in full. Realisations of the stocks of sugar shown in the balance-sheet allowed for this discharge, and also for the repayment in full of the temporary bank loan of £165,000 shown among the liabilities.

Financial Strength.

These transactions, the chairman added, could not have been carried through except with the most loyal and effective cooperation of their Dutch colleagues, and the sugar interests they represent.

The speaker proceeded: In the ordinary way my duty as chairman would have been discharged by the statement I have already made, but my colleagues and I recognise that through State intervention in this industry we have a wider responsibility.

I should like, therefore, in a few words to point out what the Ely factory has accomplished during its first two seasons. Not far short of three-quarters of a million pounds have been paid to growers of beet. Nearly £100,000 had been paid in salaries and wages, excluding the remuneration of the directors.

Several hundred thousand tons of material, including beet and sugar, have been carried on the railways on behalf of the factory. In addition, we have brought into use some of the neglected waterways of our country, the restoration of which has been a subject of discussion, to my knowledge, for the past forty years, with small practical results. I submit with confidence that the record of this factory justifies the goodwill of the State towards the industry.

With regard to financial responsibility, the operations of our factory have demanded the command of capital of not less than three-quarters of a million pounds sterling. While the profits for the past season, owing to a favourable harvest and a steady sugar market, have been satisfactory, it must not be forgotten that the factory and the farmers combined have to contend against nature in unfavourable seasons, and the factory alone has to bear the risk of a falling sugar market.

The directors have wisely devoted the main portion of the profits to the writing down of the cost of the factory, and the creation of a substantial reserve, this being in accordance with the policy which was foreshadowed when the subsidy was given to the industry, to enable it to satisfactorily compete in days to come, when the subsidy declines, and when the factory may have to meet conditions which cannot be foreseen, but which, as prudent men of business, we must provide against.

The report and accounts were adopted.

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## The Sugar Content of Beet.

### Results which differ considerably at various factories.

The Taunton Courier, Wednesday, July the 27th, 1927.

One interesting fact emerges from the reports of the three beet sugar factories forming the Anglo-Dutch group, remarks a writer in the *Field*. The average sugar content of the roots dealt with last year, was very much better at all the factories than in 1925, but the actual figures differ considerably at the various factories.

At Cantley, for instance, the amount of sugar rose from 16.73 percent in 1925, to 18.05 percent last year; at Ipswich, the roots also contained 18.05 percent sugar last year, although in 1925 they were much richer than at Cantley, for they then contained 17.43 percent of sugar.

At Ely, the sugar content was considerably lower each year, being only 15.27 percent in 1925 and 16.17 percent last year. It appears, also, that the average yield of beets per acre was about 7.4 tons at Cantley, 9 tons at Ipswich, and 10.7 tons at Ely. Thus, it appears that the richer fen lands round Ely, produced a greater weight of poorer quality roots.

The average prices paid at the three factories were, 61 shillings, 9 pence per ton at Cantley, 62 shillings per ton at Ipswich, and 57 shillings, and one penny per ton at Ely, and the growers in the latter district were, therefore, considerably better off, in spite of the lower sugar content of their roots.

It may be remembered that at the conference on the cultivation of sugar beet, which was held at Rothamsted some months ago, a Dutch expert expressed the opinion that in this country, the factories do not pay enough extra for the high-quality roots, and he gave figures showing that it paid the farmers better to grow a heavy crop of poor roots, rather than a smaller crop of rich roots.

The latter is, of course, far better for the factories, as the same weight of sugar is obtained from a smaller throughput of roots. It is a point worthy of consideration by the powers that be, when the new contracts are fixed.

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Sugar Beet Crop.

Eight shillings a ton less for farmers.

The Taunton Courier, Wednesday, August the 24th, 1927.

As the result of negotiations between the Sugar Beet Committee of the National Farmers Union, and representatives of the existing beet sugar factories, on the price to be paid under a three years contract for beet delivered during the next subsidy period, (1928-1930), a settlement was reached on Friday.

The Sugar Beet Committee decided to recommend to the branches the following terms: –

A fixed guaranteed price of forty-six shillings per ton for beets of fifteen and-a-half percent sugar content, plus an addition at the rate of three shillings for the first one percent, above fifteen and-a-half percent, and at the rate of three shillings, and four pence for each additional one percent, the reduction in respect of beets below fifteen and-a-half percent, to be at the rate of three shillings for each one percent.

The price paid for sugar beet under the present contract is fifty-four shillings per ton, for beets containing fifteen and-a-half percent sugar contents, with an addition, (or deduction), of two shillings and six pence per ton for each one percent of sugar content above, (or below), fifteen and-a-half percent.

The suggested basic price per ton under the new agreement is therefore eight shillings lower than the present rate; but the added bonus for richer quality beet is at a higher rate than the present rate.

New rates too low say farmers.

Farmers are dissatisfied with the new agreement between the Sugar Beet Committee of the National Farmers Union and representatives of the beet sugar factories as to prices to be paid for beet during 1928-1930.

Mr Walter West, chairman of Isle of Ely County Farmers Union, said on Saturday, “Forty-six shillings a ton is not enough. While a farmer makes a small profit on his crop, the manufacturers made up to fifty percent profit. This is my first year of growing sugar beet, and it will be the last if we cannot get better terms. Fifty shillings would be a fair price.”

Mr Joseph Gibson, of Collingham, near Newark, one of the principal growers in Nottinghamshire, said; “The new rates are very unsatisfactory. forty-six shillings per ton is not sufficient to make the proposition attractive.”

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Patriotic Farming.

By A Lancaster Smith.

(Author of “Farmers Pie.”)

The Nuneaton Chronicle & Midland Farmers’ Gazette, Friday, September the 23rd, 1927.

Important Sugar Beet figures.

The annual reports of four of the principal sugar beet factories provides significant reading regarding sugar beet yields and the sugar content of roots. It is sometimes assumed that a heavy yield is accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of sugar in the roots. This assumption is, however, not borne out by the facts. Briefly summarised, the averages recorded of sugar content are as follows.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cantley | 18.06 | Percent |
| Ipswich | 18.05 | Percent |
| Colwick | 17.32 | Percent |
| Spalding | 16.65 | Percent |
| Ely | 16.17 | Percent |

Approximately the average weight of crop per acre is as follows: --

| | |
|---|---|
| Cantley and Kelham | 6 tons. |
| Colwick and Spalding | 8 and a half tons. |
| Ely | 10 and a quarter ton. |
| Ipswich | 9 tons. |

“The Peterborough Advertiser,” In referring to this matter, says: -- it will be seen from these two sets of figures that the roots supplied to the Cantley and Kelham factories, although lightest in tonnage per acre, were the richest in sugar content. But it must not be too hastily assumed from this fact that the higher percentage of the sugar content recorded at the two oldest factories in this country, is a result of the experience gained by the growers concerned.

For the Ipswich growers, with only two years’ experience, have attained approximately the same average in sugar content, and a much higher average in the matter of tonnage

production. It is difficult to discover in all this statistical information, any clear proof of the prevalent idea that weight in the crop is gained at the expense of sugar content, or vice versa. Nor do the awards just made by the Anglo-Scottish Beet and Sugar Corporation under their prize scheme to growers, for their factories indicate that new growers are seriously handicapped by inexperience.

It is true the “New growers” in connection with the Colwick factory competitions produced a slightly less weight of sugar per acre than the more experienced growers. But in the Spalding factory competitions, the new growers were second only to the top most of the others.

(It is to be presumed that a number of Spalding competitors grew roots for the Colwick factory before the one at Spalding was available). As classified in the award-list, the biggest sugar weights were secured on the smallest acreages.

Further factory figures.

Sugar beet test results for the season 1926, from roots grown in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and Wiltshire, also show that the type of fertiliser used is an important factor.

Large scale tests were made in order to determine the relative value of basic phosphate, (Ephos), and superphosphate, and in every case reported, the factory figures show that the former has given a higher yield of greater ton value at lower cost.

Taking the average results, the yield from the four districts named was 8 tons, 3 hundredweights, 0 quarters, and 27 pounds, with an average sugar content of 18.34 percent, where Ephos basic phosphate was used, as compared with an average yield of seven tons, 13 hundredweights, 3 quarters and 25 pounds, with an average sugar content of 17.64 percent, where supers were used.

The value of sugar beet not only depends on the quantity produced, but on its content of sugar, for an additional 2 shillings and 6 pence per ton is paid for each percent.

In determining the relative values of phosphates on the crop, one must therefore compare not only their cost and the yields produced, but the values of yields due to their respective sugar contents.

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Town Topics.

The Lynn News and County Press, Tuesday, October the 18th, 1927.

Coast Lines, Limited, have resumed their callings at the port of Lynn. The first steamer since the war, left here on Thursday evening, having loaded 500 tons of sugar from the Ely Beet Sugar Factory for South Coast, and Bristol Channel ports. This was the Steam-ship, Cheshire Coast, and she will be followed by several other boats during the next few months, to load the sugar now being manufactured by the Ely and Lynn factories.

Interesting Facts.

The area under sugar-beet in Great Britain, has grown from 22,637 acres in 1924, to 229,200 acres this year, and the output will yield the farmers a sum totalling about £6,000,000.

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# The Sugar Beet Industry.

## Six Millions of Money for British Farmers this Year.

## Nineteen Factories Now at Work.

The Derbyshire Advertiser, Thursday, October the 21st, 1927.

At a time when the agricultural industry of this country is suffering from serious depression, when few classes of goods are produced at a profit, many are produced without profit, and some at a loss, it is heartening to know that there is one branch at least which is flourishing and making headway. The culture of sugar beet, though it occupies a very small part of the 26,000,000 acres of agricultural land, has extended its area from 3,000 acres in 1920, to over 129,000 acres in the present year, –a sufficient proof of its practical possibilities, and scope for development.

If this increase had taken place in a normal way, as the natural result of economic causes, we might congratulate ourselves upon it as a startling instance of agricultural recovery, and looked forward to the future with confidence that one problem had been solved. But, as it is, the growth has been largely artificial, assisted by means which do not occur in the ordinary course of events, and the future is safe only in proportion as, within a given time, these artificial means are replaced by means of an economic and permanent nature.

### Early days.

The history of organised beet culture in Great Britain begins with the interview which took place on April the 11th, 1924, at the House of Commons, between a deputation of the British Sugar Beet Society and Mr Noel Buxton, the Minister of Agriculture, and Mr Graham, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in Mr Ramsay MacDonald's Government. To enable the existing factories, three in number, to continue with their work, and to provide for expansion in the industry by the erection of others in districts where beet could be raised profitably, the deputation asked for some kind of stabilisation of conditions over a given period of years.

This stabilisation was to take the form of, --(1), guaranteed assistance provided by the State for a defined term, including a direct subsidy if the duty on imported sugar should fall below the amount of that assistance: (2), guaranteed advances to be made for sound factory schemes: (3), a grant to be made for the foundation and maintenance of a school for the sugar industry, where research could be made for the improvement of methods of culture and manufacture, and suitable training to be given to those desiring to enter the industry. Mr. Buxton, in an encouraging reply, said that the proposals would be sympathetically considered by the Government, but that the time had not yet come to make a definite promise.

Up to the year 1924, the industry had been progressing slowly but steadily, and was one of the very few branches of farming which showed a tendency to improve, at a period when agriculture was going through the worst of the reaction which set in at the end of the war. In 1920, there were 3,000 acres under cultivation, in 1924 there were 22,800 supplying three factories. In 1922, the factories were paying 32 shillings a ton for beet, washed, topped and placed on rail, with two shillings added or deducted for each one percent above or below a sugar content of 15 and a half percent. The following year, the price paid was 40 shillings a ton delivered at the factory, with two shillings and six pence added or deducted for each one percent above or below a sugar content of fifteen and a half percent, and one shilling added or deducted for every one shilling above or below 40 shillings charged for each hundredweight of sugar sold. At a generous calculation, an acre of beet was reckoned to produce ten tons, at

a cost of fifteen pounds, or in some cases, as little as twelve pounds to grow and put on rail. These figures showed an attractive net profit of £5 an acre but, though used as a basis of calculation, was somewhat misleading, as they represented rather the exception than the rule. Beginners usually found it difficult to raise more than six tons to the acre, and, where factories were distant, the cost of transport absorbed much of the profit.

### The Subsidy begins.

In the summer of 1924, the Government made the following definite proposals. The State was prepared to support the industry for a period of ten years by the payment of a subsidy, on a decreasing scale, on each hundredweight of sugar produced from home-grown beet: the amount for the first four years, 1924 to 1928, would be nineteen shillings and sixpence, for the next three years, thirteen shillings, and for the last three years, six shillings and sixpence. At the same time, the excise duty from which the home manufacturer was then exempt, would be reimposed.

The net effect would be to give the native product an advantage over the imported, of twenty-one shillings and five pence, as against eleven shillings and eight pence, and the Government considered that the grower should get at least forty-four shillings, and probably as much as fifty shillings a ton, for beet of a fifteen and a half percent sugar content, during the first four years of the subsidy. The Conservative Government, which was returned to power in November of the same year, supported the proposals of its predecessor, with these modifications, that the terms should apply to sugar of a polarisation of ninety-eight degrees, that factories should pay excise duty at a preferential rate of nine shillings, eight and three quarter pence per hundredweight, and that any new factories built, should comprise not less than seventy-five percent of British materials in their machinery and plant.

These proposals were at once accepted, and became law as the “British Sugar Subsidy Act, 1925.” The erection of new factories began immediately, and the Ministry of Agriculture issued an appeal for a further contracted acreage of beet to support them. The appeal was successful, the returns for 1925, showing a total of 54,700 acres, an increase of 32,000 acres on the previous year.

### The Ely factory.

On October the 15th, 1925, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Edward Wood, now Lord Wood, opened the new factory at Ely, constructed on the most up-to-date design. It is an imposing structure, standing on the banks of the Great Ouse and covering altogether an area of 66 acres. The building is 360 feet long, 82 feet wide and 52 feet high. It can deal with 1,200 tons of beet a day, and 120,000 tons in a manufacturing season, and can, at full capacity, produce 15,000 tons of sugar a year.

It has four miles of sidings, silos covering an area of 50,000 square feet, and a fleet of 50 barges. In the first season, 500 men were employed, and the management were hopeful that with their barges they would be able to restore to prosperity the waterways, which abound in the district. An agreement was made between the National Farmers Union and the Factory Companies to guarantee to growers 54 shillings a ton for beet delivered at Ely in the season 1926-27.

This factory was one of the six promised in connection with the Act. The three which were already working were Cantley, in Norfolk, and Kelham and Colwick, in Nottinghamshire; the other five, in course of erection were, Spalding in Lincolnshire, Kidderminster in Worcestershire, Ipswich and Bury Saint Edmunds in Suffolk, Wissington in Norfolk, and

Greenock in Scotland. In addition to these, it was hoped to put up a further eight for the season 1926-27.

## The De Vecchis process.

In the meanwhile, the Government, acting upon reports received, sent a Commission to Italy to investigate the process used at the Loneo factory by Doctor de Vecchis, for the extraction of sugar from beet. This process differed widely from that followed in England. Whereas in this country, the sugar was extracted by diffusion, de Vecchis first desiccated the beet and then extracted the sugar by lixiviation. By desiccation, the cossettes, or thin slices of beet were reduced in moisture content from eighty, to three percent., and in that condition, were able to be stored for several months without fermentation or loss of sugar, the sugar being subsequently extracted by washing the cossettes in warm water. The chief value in this system was, according to those who advocated it, that by enabling the beet to be stored, it made it possible for the work of the factory to be distributed evenly over a long period, instead of being crowded day and night into the few weeks immediately following the harvest. After a careful examination, the Commission reported favourably on the process and, though they considered that it required much development, suggested that it might be profitably employed in Great Britain, recommending that a small plant should be established here on a factory basis, both to test it, and to ascertain its relative cost. The Government accordingly arranged for experimental work, on the process to be undertaken at the Oxford Institute for Research in Agricultural Engineering, and afterwards acquired the British and Irish rights to it. An interim report issued from the institute, in the summer of last year expressed a favourable opinion but withheld a decision until further experiments were made. The final report, published early in the present year, made some important disclosures. It was proved that certain changes in the cossettes believed by Doctor de Vecchis to take place, either do not take place at all, or are unnecessary, and that consequently that stage of the process can be abandoned. His methods of treating the cossettes and purifying the syrup, were shown to be capable of much simplification, with the result that the costs of manufacture would be appreciably lessened. The process as now remodelled, consists of three stages; (1), desiccation, by which the cossettes are dried at a temperature of 200°F until their moisture content is reduced to five percent of the weight of the material; (2), diffusion, by which the sugar is carried off by water in solution; (3), Purification of the syrup, and extraction of the sugar.

Whether this method will be generally followed in this country is at present uncertain. It is claimed that the older factories can, at a small cost, adapt their plant to conform with its requirements, and that the installation of suitable plant in new factories, would cost little more than the installation of the old type. The difficulty is, that the new type will not, cost for cost, deal with anything like the quantity of material dealt with, by the old type, and until this obstacle is overcome, it would seem that the new type has little chance of being adopted generally.

## By-products.

The profit of the industry is not derived solely from the direct manufacture of sugar. The residue, in the form of exhausted pulp and molasses, has a market value. Growers are allowed to take from the factories, at a reduced-price, five percent in pulp of the delivered weight of beet. The pulp is used either wet or dried, as a substitute for Mangold's, and other roots, in feeding stock. The total output in 1926-27 was nearly 80,000 tons, of which 62,800 tons was dried, and of this, 36,760 tons were exported to the United States. The molasses are worked up into alcohol and potash fertilisers. A Government Commission appointed last year to investigate the production from molasses of commercial alcohol, as a substitute for petrol, issued a favourable report, and further enquiries and experiments are being made. In addition

to the pulp and molasses, the leaves and tops of the beet which are removed on the ground before dispatch, are a valuable food for cattle, fed either fresh or a silage.

## The present position.

The latest figures issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, show that the hopes entertained when the subsidy was first granted, have been more than justified. Single counties now have an area under cultivation as great as the total area for the whole country seven years ago. Last year there were only fifteen counties which had less than 400 acres, while the aggregate for the whole country has reached the enormous total of 129,463 acres. The average yield per acre is 8.63 tons, still below the minimum of 10 tons, regarded as the standard, but an advance of nearly one-ton on last season. In place of the three original factories, there are now fourteen working, giving employment to 7,194 men for an average number of 114 days in the season.

The amount of beet delivered to the factories this season was 1,117,072 tons, which with an average content of 17.31 percent, yielded 3,069,739 hundred-weights of sugar, and returned to the grower, an average price of 59 shillings, five and three-quarter pence, per ton. The output of commercial sugar per acre of beet grown is 2,656 lbs. Of by-products, there are 715,886 hundred-weights of molasses, and 88,938 tons of wet and dry pulp. These results have not been achieved without a commensurate increase in State expenditure. The total subsidy for this season was £3,308,865. At the same time, the excise duty has fallen until it now stands at 7 shillings four-and-three-quarter pence per hundredweight for sugar of 98 degrees of polarisation.

## Future prospects.

While these results are a matter for congratulation, too much stress cannot be laid upon the fact that they are mainly due to artificial support, which could not have been forthcoming in the ordinary course of events. The first real test of the vitality and the stability of the industry will come next season, when the subsidy is due to fall from 19 shillings 6 pence to 13 shillings. It will then be partly seen how far methods of production and manufacture have progressed towards making up the balance. If the improvement has been adequate, there should be no need to fear a reduction in acreage, but the improvement must proceed in proportion as the subsidy falls if the present position is to be maintained, and it must go beyond that, if the industry is to continue to expand. No one likes to doubt that it can be done, but no one under-rates the magnitude and difficulty of the task. Maintenance and expansion can only continue if there is cordial cooperation between manufacturers and growers. The factories depend on the farmers for their raw material, while the farmers look to the factories for an adequate return for their labour. Costs can be reduced by the grower in getting from his land, a heavier tonnage with a higher sugar content, and by the manufacturer, in the simplification of the process of manufacture, the exploitation of by-products, and the reduction of freight charges, by building his factories where they are easily accessible to the grower. If this reduction increases, as it should, the final raising of the subsidy will find the country with a new industry firmly established, and entirely self-dependent.

In the meanwhile, the industry has achieved two very desirable objects, –it has increased the area of land under the plough, and it has done something to stop the flow of rural population to the towns. More is expected of it than that, but for doing that alone, it deserves the practical support of all who have the true interests of British agriculture at heart.

Work will be begun on this year's crop by no fewer than nineteen factories, of which five will operate for the first time, and five will be working with greatly enlarged manufacturing capacity.

The total area under beet in Great Britain, is returned at 229,200 acres, which, at the rate of last year's yield of 8.6 tons per acre, should produce about two million tons of beet, which, in turn, should produce some 260,000 tons of white sugar, apart from molasses. This tonnage is almost two months' supply of sugar for Great Britain, and represents direct payments to farmers by the factories, of nearly £6,000,000.

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Sugar Beet growers.

New association formed for Eastern Counties.

The Saffron Walden Press and News, Friday, October the 28th, 1927.

As the result of the widespread dissatisfaction among sugar beet growers in the Eastern Counties, regarding the prices the factories are to pay for the next three years, a new association has been formed, having, as its main object, a revision of these prices.

A meeting of the new Association was held at Bury Saint Edmunds on Wednesday, when Mr Samuel Moore presided over a gathering, representative of the principal sugar beet growing areas in the Eastern Counties.

It was stated that only three weeks had elapsed since the idea of forming the Eastern Counties Sugar Beet Growers Protection Association had been considered at a preliminary meeting, and during the interval, the number of applications for membership received, had made it abundantly clear, that such an association was ardently desired by sugar beet growers.

It could now be definitely stated, that the acreage represented, ran into many thousands, and the number was being added to, daily. Mr A Symonds, (Bury Saint Edmunds), contended that the business of negotiating agreements with the factories was one for sugar beet growers themselves, acting through their own combination. He felt perfectly sure, that as growers learned more of this association, they would give it their firm support.

Major A E Layton, (Norwich), said they ought to make it clear that they were not out to split the ranks of the National Farmers Union, but sugar beet growers were insisting that negotiations should be reopened, and that if the National Farmers Union would not take up the matter, the growers must do it themselves.

Mr. T W Clarke, (Ely), said that in addition to the question of prices, there were other matters affecting sugar beet growers that the association might well attend to. At the prices suggested, sugar beet growing was not worth a candle.

A general committee, consisting of the following, was elected; Messrs. S Moore, (Soham), A C Rickwood, (Chatteris), T W Clarke, (Ely), S Moore, junior, (Soham), R C Grey, (Hunts), G R Hicks, (Bury Saint Edmunds), C H I Foister, (Hunts), W H Gotobed, (Somersham), B Tompkins, (Thetford), A J Edwards, (Bardwell), E J Shropshire, (Suffolk), A Symonds, (Bury), P Hubbard, (Coxford), C W Caruil, (Wrentham), E A Layton, (Cambridge), and Major A E Layton, (Norwich).
Mr. G H Lewis, 22, Saint Andrews-street, Cambridge, was appointed secretary.

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Ouse Drainage Board

Navigation Regulations Confusion.

Letting Barges to Ely Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, October the 28th, 1927.

The regulations for the navigation of the South Level rivers, which include the Cam as far up as Clay-hithe, relating to the passing and lighting of vessels, differ from the general rules for navigation. This has led to some confusion, and at today's meeting of the Ouse Drainage Board, it was agreed to approach the Ministry of Transport with a view to the bylaws for the South Level rivers being altered to bring them in line with the general rules of navigation. The meeting was presided over by Mr R Stephenson.

Thetford Fen Liabilities.

The Thetford Fen Commissioners wrote asking the Board to take over a debt of £2,300, which existed on the Commissioner's banks when the Board came into force. The letter stated, “With the heavy expenditure on banks incurred by the Commissioners, just prior to the taking over of the banks by your Board, the district is now rapidly getting into a condition which will make it in a bankrupt state, and totally unable to pay either its own drainage taxes, or the taxes imposed by the Ouse Drainage Board. The existing drainage machinery badly needs replacing by more efficient plant, but this is impossible to consider with the existing liability of the district.” It was stated that the Board had repeatedly set its face against admitting any of these claims, but by a majority of one, it was agreed to refer the letter to the Finance Committee for consideration.

Mr. G Hunnybun’s Illness.

A letter was read from Mr Kenneth Hunnybun, stating that Mister G Hunnybun was seriously ill, and that it was out of the question for him to attend any business whatever.

The Vice-chairman, (Mr Hutson), said he was sure all would wish to express their deep regret to Mr Hunnybun in his illness, and he moved a letter to be sent from the Board expressing their regret, and hopes for his speedy recovery.

Mr Preston, who seconded, said he had always looked upon Mr Hunnybun as a most valuable member of the Board; he had given them great assistance on several legal questions. The chairman associated himself with the sentiments expressed, and at his suggestion, it was also decided to send a letter to Mr Pentelow, another member of the Board who is ill, wishing him a speedy recovery.

Finance.

The report of the Finance Committee stated that the debit balance at the bank amounted to £55,994, sixteen shillings, and eleven pence, being general account of £30,994, sixteen shillings, and 11 pence, and loan account of £25,000.

Sugar Factory and Barges.

In order to meet the greater demand for the service of their water transport fleet, the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited., asked the Board to enter into an agreement with them for the years

1928, 1929 and 1930, for the hire of 25 barges, and one tug, from October the first to December the 25th in each of the three years. The works Committee recommended the Board enter into an agreement with the factory to hire 25 barges and a tug, for the sum of £25 per week, for the three months in each year, the factory to pay all the insurance, and to return at the end of each year, the barges and tug in the same condition as when they took them from the Board. A letter from the factory stated that the proposed terms of the agreement were suitable, with the exception that they would like the choice of hiring the barges for one, two or three months, at the terms stated

Mr H J Martin said that during the months it was proposed, they should lend the factory the barges, the Boards engineer felt he would have to go slowly, because there would be such a demand for men, and that it would take all the men he could employ to work the barges, which would remain after the twenty-five had been hired to the factory. The arrangement would be a great assistance to the Beet Sugar Factory, and also to the men who paid the Board's rates. The factory were anxious to give more water delivery contracts, and the farmers were anxious to have them.

The Vice-chairman said some of them felt they should not, at the moment, enter into a contract for more than a year.

By entering into a three-year contract, they would be binding the new Board to an arrangement they might not wish to have.

Mr. M Stocks moved the Board enter into an arrangement for one year only, and asked why they should tie themselves to the Ely factory alone, supposing other factories wish to hire barges from them.

Mr. J.L. Luddington seconded.

Mr Darby pointed out that these barges were really the property of the South level, and he thought it would be a great pity if they did not accept the recommendation of the Committee.

They could very well spare the barges during the months the factory wanted them. He thought it would be a very good stroke of business on the part of the Board.

The Engineer said the Board would have 21 barges left after they had let the 25 to the factory. These 25 would, in the event of the factory not hiring them, be standing idle during the months of October, November and December, owing to labour conditions in the area.

At the present time, there was a difficulty in getting men, and they had lost many. The price suggested was a fair one.

Mr Parsons mentioned that some of the men taking up the sugar beet were getting as much as one pound a day. He thought the board would be making a very good bargain in entering into the arrangement.

Alderman Few said the Board was treading on dangerous ground. They were very nearly an extinct body, –he hoped they would be extinct before they had had their Christmas dinner, – and they should not bind their successors for three years.

The amendment was defeated by the casting vote of the Chairman, and the original recommendation of the committee was carried.

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Country-Side News in Brief.

The Lynn News and County Press, Tuesday, November the 1st, 1927.

The sugar beet harvest in the Feltwell, Methwold, and Hockwold areas is now in full swing. Large quantities are being conveyed daily to Lakenheath Station, London and North Eastern Railway, for the Ely factory, and the new light railway across the fens is used for conveying beets to the Wissington factory. Much beet is being transported also by river and road.

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100 Percent Profit.

Huge gains in Beet Sugar.

Remarkable statement by Liverpool Refiner.

The Liverpool Post and Mercury, Wednesday, November the 2nd, 1927.

As showing the effect of the beet sugar subsidy upon the British sugar refining industry, it was stated at the meeting of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce yesterday, that one beet company, with £400,000 capital, made about £350,000 profit for the first year, and expected to make £400,000 the second year.

The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, yesterday, gave further consideration to the question of the beet sugar subsidy, particularly in its relation to the British sugar refining industry. Lord Derby was in the chair.

Doctor A C Cumming, (a director of Messrs. Macfie and Sons Limited, the Liverpool refiners), who attended the meeting, was appointed to represent the Chamber at a conference of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce to consider the subject.

In answer to questions, he said the refining industry was up against general competition and dumping, quite apart from the subsidy. If it was not for the subsidy, the refining industry would be able to put up a fight against the competition and the dumping. But against all three, they were powerless.

Being Driven Out of Existence.

Unless something was done, the British refining industry would be driven out of existence. The Government should do something to help to keep the industry alive.

Lord Derby, –What do you want the government to do?

Doctor Cumming, –We don't exactly know; the Government is pledged not to give any protection on foodstuffs, but there are other ways and means in which they could help us, for instance, by an alteration in the scales of duty, and by an alteration in Imperial preference, which at present is given on white sugar. Continuing, Doctor Cumming said it was true they could take the beet sugar and refine it, but already the beet factories had put up their own refineries.
Answering other questions, Doctor Cumming said one beet company, of £400,000 capital, had made an approximate profit in the first year of £350,000, and expected to make £400,000 in the second year.

## Many Shares Held by Foreigners.

In the largest group of the beet sugar concerns, the majority of shares were held by foreigners. The result of the closing of some of the refineries had been to increase the amount of unemployment enormously. Four out of the five Scotch refiners were at present closed, and none of them was reopening until after the next Budget.

A Member. –Is it not fair to assume that as this is a diminishing subsidy, your trouble will diminish also?
Doctor Cumming. --A fair analogy to that, is the case of the Irishman whose horse died just as he has succeeded in teaching it to live without grass, (laughter).

Replying to another question. Doctor Cumming said at present they were pressing for an inquiry by the Government.

## Two Concerns Under Dutch Control.

Our financial editor writes: –Dr Cumming did not mention the name of the company which, he says, made £350,000 in its first year, on a capital of £400,000. But all the new beet sugar factories have been making extraordinary profits. The experience of two companies which published their reports in June last, may be cited.

The Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, last year completed the issue of its authorised capital of £400,000, and during the year to March 31st last, made a profit on trading of £287,232, out of which debenture, interest, depreciation, etc, had to be met. The Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited, with a capital of £450,000, made a trading profit during the year to March 31st, of £307,540.

In each case, only twelve and a half percent free of tax, was distributed as dividend. These companies are both under the financial control of a Dutch concern, and the bulk of the profits will go to Amsterdam. Another company, Home Grown Sugar, Limited, with an issued capital of £125,000, made £159,011 profit.

## Menaced On All Sides.

Commenting on Doctor Cummings remarks, last night, a representative of Messrs. Fairrie and Company, the Liverpool sugar refiners, said that it was certainly correct that large profits have been, and are being made by the home-grown beet sugar factories.

“We appreciate,” he said, “the difficulties of the farmer, but it must be remembered that the Subsidy Act, designed to assist agriculture, has had unexpected effects on the old-established refining industry. While there is room for a home-grown sugar industry, these effects must be considered.

“The British refiner is menaced on all sides. The Continental refiners, encouraged at home by subsidies and tariff protected cartels, use this country as a dumping-ground for their surplus produce.

The British refiner receives no help of any kind; the dice, indeed, are loaded heavily against him. In Greenock, four of the five refineries are closed. Is this lamentable story to be repeated in Liverpool? Unless governmental assistance is forthcoming the British refining industry, local and national, is doomed to extinction.”

## Dumping of Foreign Sugar.

The Sugar Federation of the British Empire, decided at their last meeting to frame representations, to be placed before the Government at an early date, on the necessity for immediate action to prevent permanent injury to the refining industry in Britain, and the producers of sugar in all parts of the Empire, by the dumping of foreign sugars.

The Federation's policy of free entry of all Empire sugars sold to British refiners, was reaffirmed.

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## Farmers Pilgrimage to Ely.

### A Large Beet Sugar Factory.

The West Sussex Gazette: Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Kent, Thursday, November the 10th, 1927.

Nearly 400 Sussex and Hampshire farmers were on Tuesday the guests of Mr. van Rossum and his colleagues of the Anglo-Dutch group, who are interested in the development of beet sugar factories in this country, on a special visit arranged to the beet sugar factory near Ely. It was the biggest joint excursion southern farmers have ever made. What they saw greatly interested the pilgrims.

The object of the excursion was to secure the support of southern farmers for the proposed beet sugar factory at Fishbourne, Chichester. Four hundred healthy farmers represent considerable avoirdupois, and two big engines drew the special train which ran through from Portsmouth to Ely, picking up passengers at Havant, Chichester, Barnham, Arundel, Pulborough, and Horsham, (where some joined from East Sussex). In consequence of the foggy weather, the pilgrims were rather late in arriving at the shrine, and it was about 2 pm before the motor-buses discharged them at the factory, --several miles from Ely, on the banks of the Cambridgeshire Ouse.

### 250,000 Tons a year.

The factory is a big place, dealing with the produce of some 25,000 acres annually. This represents something like a quarter of a million tons of beet a year. During the months of the “campaign,” as the factory people call the season for handling the crop, (from about October to January), it deals with 2,500 or 2,600 tons a day, representing about one-seventh of that weight in sugar. Last year, some 25,000 tons of sugar were produced, apart from pulp and molasses as by-products.

An all-pervading odour of boiling beetroot hung about the factory. Outside it, where lorries were unloading their cargoes, were two enormous pyramids of beet, which were being constantly replenished from cranes, while about their bases, strong jets of water were continually washing the beet into swiftly running channels of water which hurried them along into a mammoth pump, which raised them in masses into a washer, from which, in turn they were transported to an automatic weigher, whence they fell into cutting mills and started on their progress towards conversion into sugar.

### From beet to sugar.

Enormous quantities of water are necessary for the purposes of a beet sugar factory, and for this, among other reasons, the Fishbourne site is particularly favourable. The soil in West Sussex is stated to be especially suitable for the crop, yielding as high a sugar content as

anywhere in Europe. Having seen the sugar beet started on its career, the Pilgrim farmers preceded to follow it in the various stages of its trans-migration. These included shredding, extraction by various processes of its juice, purification of the latter with quicklime, then getting rid of the lime and remaining impurities by carbonation and filtering, then evaporating the liquid from the juice, and crystallising the residue, till the pure sugar, after executing a kind of “cake walk” along some queerly jerking planks to break up any lumps, passes into a pure stream of crystal white powder into bagging machines, and finally into 2 hundredweight sacks with the proud label “Homemade English Grown Sugar, manufactured at Ely, Cambridgeshire.” Hundreds of the sacks were piled in a vast store containing, at the time of the visit, some 5,000 tons of sugar, with room for plenty more.

Whirring’s and Sizzling’s.

All these various processes were being carried out in a building covering a large area, and amid what to the uninitiated, was a maze of whirling machinery, –spinning wheels, sizzling cauldrons, formidable looking retorts, and huge conduit pipes, mysterious hissings and steaming’s, electric bulbs glowing with different colours, whirring belts, and in some places, a cloud of fine sugar dust, which made the very air taste sweet. In a great powerhouse, engineers presided over the electrical plant which supplied the power for the whole vast organisation, amid an everlasting purring and gentle screaming of Dynamos.

The Ely factory employs during its “campaign period, some 500 persons. During the “campaign” its activities continue night and day, the staff working in three shifts. When the “campaign” is over, –about the end of January, –the majority of the seasonal labour is disbanded, though, from 100 to 150 of the technical and semi-technical staff are engaged throughout the year. It is stated that the seasonal labour largely finds employment during the rest of the year in the agriculture of the neighbourhood.

The Fishbourne factory, if it comes into being, will not be on quite so large a scale as that at Ely. It is proposed to construct the factory with a capacity for dealing with about 1,200 tons of beet a day, though, –as has been the case at Ely, –the plant will be capable of extension and “tuning up” to meet a considerable expansion in the supply of beet.

The pilgrim farmers spent about two and a half hours at the factory, and got home after what they all agreed was a most interesting and instructive expedition, at between 10 and 11 the same night.

Meetings and the scheme.

The Anglo-Dutch group scheme for building a beet sugar factory at Fishbourne was explained by Mr. H Wharton at a farmers meeting, convened by the Hampshire and West Sussex branches of the National Farmers Union, held at the Red Lion Hotel, Petersfield, last Wednesday. Captain Robinson, chairman of the West Sussex branch, thought the proposals should prove a sound investment, and Mr. John Langmead, chairman of the West Sussex Sugar Beet Committee, said that if farmers had land upon which they could grow mangels, they could also grow sugar beet on that land.

His own experience had converted him towards beet growing. Mr. William Lawson, agricultural adviser to the West Sussex County Council, said Sussex farmers were now enthusiastic over growing beet. Captain Judd, of Winchester, who presided, said it was a question whether 41 shillings a ton would be sufficiently remunerative for Hampshire, in view of the varied soil. Probably with a light, sandy soil it would pay. The railway rate to Chichester was also to be considered by farmers living some distance from the factory, and he would like to hear whether it would be possible to have a flat rate for carriage within the radius of the

factory. “I do not know the position of the West Sussex farmers, but I know the position of Hampshire farmers is pretty bad,” and he did not think Hampshire farmers would welcome compulsion to take shares. Mr. Wharton replied that the flat rate question was being considered by the Southern Railway, and he suggested the Hampshire branches should approach the railway company for a reasonable rate.

As to the shares, his company wanted to give the farmers a straight deal, and to establish the factory on sound business principles. While congratulating West Sussex friends upon the spade-work they had done, Mr Walton, Secretary of the Hampshire County Branch, regretted that Hampshire had not been approached earlier.

At a meeting of the executive of the Hampshire branch of the National Farmers Union at Winchester on Saturday, Captain Robinson said they had actually obtained preferential rates from the railway company, these varying from 2 shillings and 6 pence per ton from Havant, to five shillings and 10 pence per ton from Romsey and Winchester. The Secretary was requested to draw up a statement regarding the terms and conditions of the factory promoters, and forward it to the branches, before the executive passed any opinion regarding the scheme.

Disappointment at the proposed contract price of 41 shillings per ton for beets in connection with the contemplated erection of the Fishbourne factory, was expressed at a meeting held under the auspices of the Fareham and Hampshire Farmers’ Club, and the Botley and Bishop’s Waltham branch of the National Farmers Union at Fareham on Monday.

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Beet Sugar.

Increasing prosperity of the industry.

The Birmingham Gazette, Tuesday, November the 15th, 1927.

The increased prosperity of the sugar beet industry is revealed in the balance-sheets for 1926 to 1927, as issued yesterday as a White Paper of the companies which manufactured in Great Britain sugar and molasses from home-grown beet. Nine show profits and two losses.

The most remarkable result was achieved by the United Sugar Company Limited., Bury Saint Edmunds factory, where a profit of £153,782, not only wiped out the previous year’s debit balance of £63,245, but left a margin of £45,197.

Other profits were:

The English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited., Cantley factory, £90,101; -- Home-Grown Sugar Limited, Kelham factory, £3,125; --the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited., Ely factory, £56,250; the Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited., Ipswich factory, £50,000; --the Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Colwick and Spalding factories, £63,119; --the West Midland Sugar Company, Limited., Kidderminster factory £46,358; --Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited., York, Poppleton, Felstead, and Cupar factories, £17,524; the Central Sugar Company, Limited., Peterborough factory, £45,419.

Both the companies showing losses more than doubled their debit balances during the year. British Sugar Manufacturers Limited, Wissington factory, started the year with a loss of £39,040 and added a deficiency of £44,831, making a total debit balance of £83,871, The

Orchard Sugar Company Limited, Greenock factory, lost £46,932 during the past year, which added to a debit, brought forward of £43,028, makes a total loss of £89,960.

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## Sugar Beet.

### It's application in British Agriculture.

By Mr. P N Norman.

The Chichester Observer and West Sussex Recorder, Wednesday, November the 30th, 1927.

[The subjoined article was delivered as an address at the Rotary Club of Bognor on Monday in last week.]

Mr. Norman said: --

In introducing the subject of sugar beet, I wish to state that the following paper has been compiled, partly from my own experience as a grower for the last two years, from lectures I have attended on the subject, from a recent visit to a factory in full working, and, from various articles I have read on the subject.

The sugar beet is a cultivated variety of the sea beet, or beta maritima, which grows wild on muddy seashores. It has been cultivated in Germany, France, Holland and other European countries for many years. In 1747, sugar was first extracted from the beet by Marggraf, (a German chemist), the first factory for the purpose, being built near Breslau in 1799. In 1912, the first modern factory in England was opened at Cantley, in Norfolk, and in 1921 a factory was established at Kelham Nottinghamshire, the Government subscribing £25,000 of the capital. Since then, a number of factories have been established in various parts of the country, (other than in the south), largely owing to a subsidy, which the Government granted to the industry, and which was supported by all political parties.

The commercial seed used in sugar beet cultivation is grown from "mother seed", which is propagated from year to year, and the varieties have been much improved by selection and scrutiny.

When originally cultivated, the roots contained only about 6 percent of sugar. But by continual selection over many years, the plant has now been so improved, that it produces and stores in the root from 15 to 20 percent of its net weight in sugar.

### Effect on Agriculture.

I will now endeavour to explain what effect, I consider, the culture of sugar beet will have on British agriculture. It is an indisputable fact, that in recent years, arable farming has fallen into a parlous state, owing to a series of uneconomic factors ruling the same, and which are beyond the farmer's control. Briefly stated, they are thus: –

Wheat prices, ruled by imported wheats, (nearly all of superior milling quality to ours), in relation to the cost of production. The lessened demand for oats and clover hay, consequent on the decrease in horses for town work, owing to increased motor traction. The low price of barley other than the best malting samples, again, owing to the import of feeding offal's. The effect of the foregoing, has been that in the last few years, thousands of acres of arable land

have been laid down to pasture, and farms which have been mainly arable, have been adapted for dairying, to such an extent, that the industry is faced with a possible over production of milk.

The only avenue open under the old system then, is the grazing and fattening of cattle and sheep. What do we find here? An ever-increasing importation and sale of excellent chilled and frozen meat at a much lower figure, (fortunately benefiting the general public), than the cost of the home-produced article. Some would say here, “What a tale of woe!” This has not been cited with that intention; Or perhaps, “Why do farmers do the unprofitable thing?” This is getting nearer the point where sugar beet comes in.

## A Selling Root Crop.

It has long been considered by thinking farmers, that what is wanted is a selling root crop, with an assured sale. This has been lacking until now, the expensively grown roots under the old rotation, being mainly consumed on the farm. The British Government, faced with the fact of an ever-decreasing acreage of arable land, and as I have before stated, with the support of all parties, granted a subsidy to the new industry over a period of years, and on a falling scale, making it possible, even in the experimental stage, for it to be profitably grown.

What do we now find? I can best explain this, by quoting the experience of other countries. The introduction of sugar beet culture into the farm rotation, has determined the progress of all the other branches of agriculture in those countries where it has become established. This plant requires large amounts of fertilisers, which are not entirely consumed by the crop; the residues are thus available for the succeeding crop of the rotation. The careful labour and deep cultivation required for its successful growth, cleans and mellows the soil, and, in addition, the crop produces large quantities of food stuffs for the farm stock.

This in conjunction with dried beet pulp, bought from the factories by growers at an economic figure, takes the place of the root crop formally grown and consumed entirely on the farm.

These advantages of the crop, other than, of course, the purchased pulp, may be said to be prerequisites to the grower, because the sale of the roots produces a profit over and above the cost of production. The tops and leaves retained in the field, are said to be equal to about 75 percent of the weight of the beets delivered to the factory, and are estimated to be worth an equivalent acreage of white turnips.

As a green manure, the tops possess considerable manurial value if ploughed in. They are, however, of greater value as food for cattle and sheep, a portion of the fresh tops being carted off from time to time for feeding to cattle, and a sufficient quantity left in the ground to be folded over with sheep.

## Cultivation Steadily Increasing.

A well grown sugar beet has a tap root which penetrates to a great depth in the soil, enabling the crop to withstand drought, after it has passed its first stage of growth. Thus, they open up the soil and utilise the plant food from the lower layers of the soil. The increased fertility of land after it has been under sugar beet, is clearly shown by the agricultural statistics of Belgium and Germany. Figures have been published concerning the crop grown in Belgium, in those areas where sugar beet is cultivated, which show that since the year 1846 until the present time, the acreage devoted to its growth has steadily risen, while, at the same time, the yields of cereals per acre have materially increased, and the number of cattle maintained per acre, has increased by nearly fifty percent.

In Germany it is generally admitted that sugar beet has been of immense value, and that the intense and intelligent cultivation required, has proved everywhere an advantage to the other

branches of agriculture. With the experience already gained in this country, there can be no question that our climate is just as well suited as the rest of Europe to its remunerative cultivation, and also to the production of beets which compare favourably in sugar content, with those grown in the chief beet growing districts of the Continent.

## Local Application.

Now as to its local application, in my own experience as a grower. At the beginning of last year, I entered into a contract to grow ten acres each year for two years, with a company having a factory at Ipswich. Last year's crop averaged nearly thirteen tons per acre of beets sold, with an average sugar content of seventeen and a half percent. The basic price per ton being on fifteen and a half percent of sugar, (the customary selling percentage), every one percent above that, added two shillings and six pence per ton to the price.

The crop showed a very fair return for the expenditure on same, and left, as I have before stated, valuable residue for feeding on the farm. This year, in addition to the Ipswich contract, I entered into another with a Scottish firm, the beets having to be railed to Littlehampton, and from thence water-borne to Scotland. The crop is now being lifted, and promises to be very fair for the season. The lifting and delivering period is from October the first to December the thirty-first, thus allowing a fair period for the feeding of the green tops.

The West Sussex Farmers Union, --in conjunction with East Hampshire Growers, --are using every endeavour to establish a factory at Chichester, and have entered into an agreement with a group of financiers, who have already several factories in this country under their control, for the erection of a factory. This they will do, provided a minimum of 8,000 acres are contracted for, in the near future, on a three years agreement. On November the 8th, with between three and four-hundred other farmers, and at the invitation of the group of financiers already mentioned, I had the pleasure of going by special train to Ely, where we were conducted over the largest sugar beet factory in England, in full working.

## The Activities at Ely Factory.

This factory is capable of dealing with 2,500 tons of beet per day during the making period, (approximately four months), and employs about 1,000 men, working in three eight-hour shifts, with no rest day. The beets are delivered to the factory from the farms, partly by road and rail, and the remainder by water, a fleet of 250 barges being kept for the purpose. Lorries are unloaded in a unique way, by water forced from an overhead pipe, and two large cranes, suitably placed, unload the railway trucks and barges on to two huge dumps, which, at the time of our visit, were said to be composed respectively of between two and three thousand tons of beets.

From the silos or dumps, the beets are conveyed through a series of flumes or channels of rushing water to the mammoth pump, which elevates them into the beet washer. They are then again elevated to the automatic weigher, and thence fall into the cutting mills.

The shredded beet, (called cossettes), is now conveyed to the Steffen presses, where a certain amount of juice is extracted. On leaving the Steffen, the cossettes are conveyed to the diffusion batteries, where the rest of the sugar in solution is extracted.

The exhausted cossettes (called wet pulp) are discharged into a trough below the diffusion batteries, and flow to the pump elevator, then conveyed to the pulp presses, and thence to the pulp driers.

The dried pulp is blown through a large pipe into the pulp store, where it is bagged. The raw juice is measured in the measuring tank, and then goes to the lime mixers, where quicklime is

mixed with it for purification purposes. The limed juice passes into the carbonation tanks, where carbonic acid gas is pumped through it, causing the greater proportion of the impurities to form insoluble compounds. The carbonated juice is then forced through filter presses, thus removing the compounds. It is then reheated and again carbonated and filtered, so as to remove all the lime.

And so, to Sugar.

The thin juice is then conveyed into the evaporators where the water is evaporated off, thus making the thin juice into thick juice. This passes into the vacuum or boiling press, where it is boiled down to a massecuite. The massecuite then falls into the crystallisers, where the sugar crystallisation process is continued.

The sugar is separated out of the massecuite in the centrifugal's, and then conveyed to the granulator, passes onto the sugar bins, thence to the bagging machine, and into the sugar store, ready for despatch.

I have endeavoured to give a summarised account of the process as it was explained to us, going through the factory, and set out at greater length on pamphlets which were presented to us. One noticed in the factory, that the most complicated machines used in the process were of Dutch construction, and were also manned by Dutch men. This, no doubt, will alter as times go on, and the industry becomes stabilised.

In conclusion, I trust that the various references in this paper have been made clear, as to their connection with the subject: if not, that I am forgiven any mistakes made in dealing with a new and somewhat complicated subject, and which I would rather have seen in more capable hands.

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Sugar Beet.

A Subsidised Industry.

Profits from the taxpayer.

(By J T Scanlan)

The Gloucester Journal, Saturday, December the 3rd, 1927.

History seems to be repeating itself in the sugar beet industry. The returns of the various companies in this subsidised industry, while scarcely up to the level of profits in the first Imperial sugar beet manufactory erected in France, are, to say the least of it, satisfactory. In addition to the financial results, there is a marked similarity in the history of sugar beet in both countries, as each was started as a result of the necessity created by a World War.

In 1747, a Prussian scientist named Magraff had experimented on the possibilities of extracting sugar from beetroot, and laid the results of his experiments before the Berlin Society, somewhere about 1750.

Magraff had succeeded in obtaining a 6.2 percent sugar content from white beet, and 4.5 from red, but these results were so unsatisfactory that the Berlin Society did nothing to further the experiments. Little more was heard of sugar beet, but in 1800, another Prussian chemist, Achard by name, showed that he had been engaged in further experiments. He laid his claims

before the Paris Institute of Scientists, and in a paper read before the Institute, he made wild claims as to the number of substances which could be extracted from the beetroot.

The Paris Institute, while showing little enthusiasm for the vision of a Europe devoted to the growing of beetroot, appointed a Committee to investigate the claims made by Achard, but after a searching inquiry, the claims were rejected as useless.

Twelve years later, driven by the necessity created by the blockade of the French coast and his own Milan decrees, Bonaparte was obliged to find some method of allaying the discontent caused by the lack of sugar.

He instructed several chemists and scientists to lend their energies to this task, and various things were tried, but without success. But one chemist, M Deyeux, had followed up the experiments of our Achard, and so successful were his results, that in 1812, the first Imperial sugar Beet Manufactory was established in Rambouillet.

As sugar beet manufacture on its present scale is due to the lessons of the Great War, the similarity is obvious.

But unfortunately, it does not end here.

Historians tell us that in the first year the Rambouillet sugar factory made more than sufficient profit to pay all the initial cost of installing the plant, but the French people paid a heavy price for their sugar. When supplies were available from Jamaica and the Indies, the cheap sugar from abroad would have wiped out the local product, but a heavy duty was imposed on all sugar entering France, and the factories were saved. In other words, they were subsidised by the consumer as a consumer, instead of as a taxpayer.

Now what of Britain? If we take the returns from three leading factories, –Kelham, Cantley and Ely, –we will see that the Rambouillet factory is not alone in making substantial profits from the manufacture of sugar beet. At Kelham, the issued capital is £125,000, and the profits for last season amounted to no less than £159,011.

The season nominally begins in October and ends in February, and as only 83,654 tons of beet had been worked, the profit is roughly £2 per ton. The factory at Cantley returns a profit of £306,949 on an issued capital of £450,507, with 161,841 tons of beet worked, again roughly £2 per ton.

Ely factory returns a profit of £307,540 on an issued capital of £450,000, with 188,800 tons of beet worked. If we turn to Hansard of the 20th of July 1927, a statement by the Minister of Agriculture shows precisely where those profits come from.

For the purposes of comparison, we will take the profit of the three companies for last season and place beside them the amount of subsidy paid, according to Hansard, July the 20th, 1927.

Kelham: £242,679 fifteen shillings and seven pence 1926-27 subsidy paid on sugar. £27,447 sixteen shillings and four pence paid on molasses. £306,949 profits.

Cantley: £460,984 five shillings and seven pence 1926-27 subsidy paid on sugar. £44,266 fifteen shillings paid on molasses. £159,011 profits.

Ely: £466,831 fifteen shillings and no pence 1926-27 subsidy paid on sugar. £69,578 no shillings and nine pence paid on molasses. £307,540 profits.

In each case it will be seen that the entire profit is paid by the British taxpayer, and whilst the amount of the subsidy is reduced by 18 shillings and sixpence per ton from October next, even this will leave a fairly large margin.

In the case of Kelham, the reduction will still leave a profit of 65.3 percent, Cantley, 34.9 percent and Ely, 29.5 percent.

Altogether, the amount of subsidy paid in 1926-27 was no less than £2,998,550 seven shillings and 11 pence.

As the subsidy is paid on a tonnage basis, it is not surprising to learn that the acreage under beet multiplies each year. In 1924-25 there were only 22,441 acres under beet. In 1925-26 it had increased to 54,750. This year, it is 125,814 acres, and a subsidy somewhere in the region of £6 million will be paid before the reduced rate comes into force.

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Fire at Ely Factory.

Sleeping Quarters of Canteen Burnt Out.

Young Man Badly Burned.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, December the 9th, 1927.

A fire which might have spread with serious consequences, had it not been for the smart action of the Ely Fire Brigade, broke out in a canteen at the Ely beet factory, early on Monday morning.

The canteen, which is a wooden building used for sleeping quarters, was discovered to be on fire at 12:57 a.m., and within 20 minutes a considerable portion of it was burned to the ground. Immediately on the discovery of the outbreak, a telephone message was sent to the police, and they gave the alarm to the Ely, Cambridge, and Littleport Brigades.

Within 11 minutes of receiving the call, the Ely Brigade was out of the station, and arriving at the scene they found the place burning very fiercely. They played on it, with water from the Ouse, which flows by the factory.

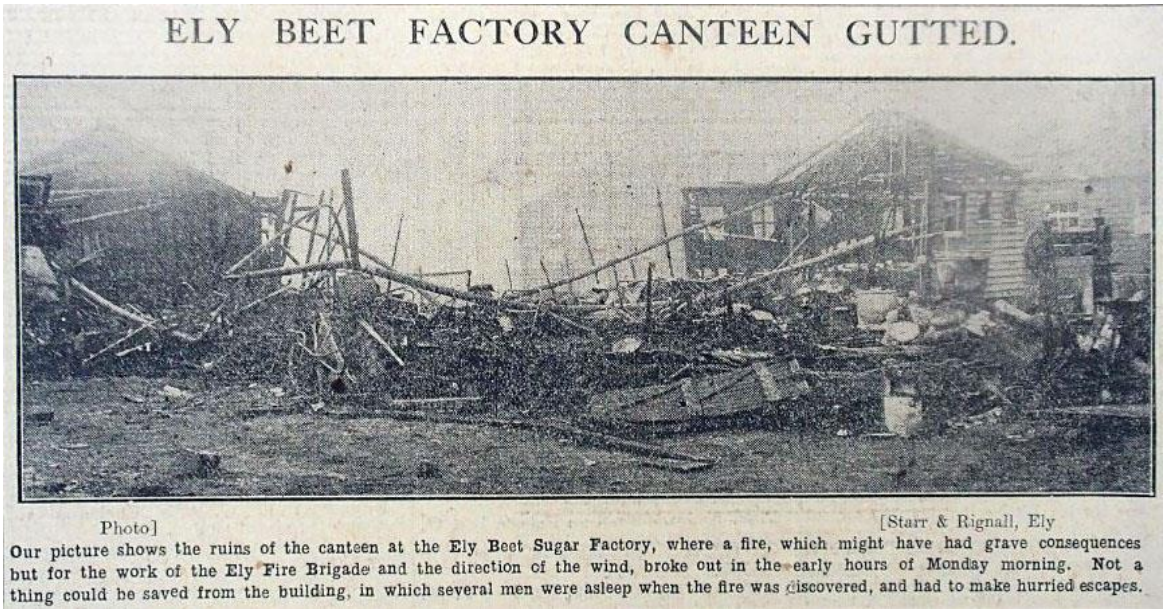
Luckily, there was little wind blowing at the time, and although the flames rose to the height of the factory, fortunately they did not spread to the sugar store, which stands close by.
The factory's own hydrants did a lot to prevent the fire from spreading.

The Cambridge Brigade was stopped by the police at Ely, as their services were not required. The Ely Brigade were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Archer and Mr. H Sedgwick. All the occupants of the sleeping quarters managed to escape uninjured, with the exception of Mr. Littleboy, a nephew of the canteen manager, who sustained bad burning injuries to the face, hands and arms.

He was seen by Doctor G B Davis of Ely, who ordered his removal to Addenbrooke's Hospital, whither he was taken in Messrs. Cass's motor ambulance.
In an interview with a representative of this journal, the manager paid a high tribute to the Fire Brigade, for the effective way they dealt with a very serious situation.

Photograph and caption below.

Caption reads: Our picture shows the ruins of the canteen at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, where a fire, which might have had grave consequences but for the work of the Ely Fire Brigade and the direction of the wind, broke out in the early hours of Monday morning. Not a thing could be saved from the building, in which several men were asleep when the fire was discovered, and had to make hurried escapes.



ELY BEET FACTORY CANTEEN GUTTED.

Photo] [Starr & Rignall, Ely

Our picture shows the ruins of the canteen at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, where a fire, which might have had grave consequences but for the work of the Ely Fire Brigade and the direction of the wind, broke out in the early hours of Monday morning. Not a thing could be saved from the building, in which several men were asleep when the fire was discovered, and had to make hurried escapes.

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Ely Beet Factory Blaze.

Canteen completely gutted.

Youth trapped in the flames.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, December the 9th, 1927.

A disastrous fire broke out at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory in the early hours of Monday morning, and as a result of it, George Littleboy, aged 18, of 5, Crow Street, Lakenham, Norwich, was admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, suffering severely from burns and shock.

So disastrous was the outbreak that, within a comparatively short time, the whole of the canteen was gutted, and so reduced to the ground that only charred pieces of wood, and bent and twisted iron pipes, remained.

It was only the direction of the wind and the wonderful work of the Ely City Fire Brigade which saved the factory from becoming involved. Standing in close proximity to the canteen were the huge molasses tank and the sugar store, and had the wind been blowing from the north, instead of the east, it is difficult to perceive how these could have escaped.

Within a few minutes of the outbreak being discovered by Joshua Bates, who is employed in the canteen, the place was a roaring furnace, enormous flames licking into the air high above the molasses tank, a massive structure separated from the canteen by only a few feet. An

alarm was instantly raised by Mr William Littleboy, the canteen manager, who rushed through the premises to call out of their beds the 14 persons who were asleep. In a canteen adjoining, there were four women, also asleep. These had to be roused and, hurriedly dressing themselves, they did what they could to help fight the fire until the Ely Fire Brigade arrived. The women included Mrs Littleboy, Miss M. Bennington, Miss Hutton and Miss I. Peel.

The danger of the fire reaching the factory was so much feared that, in addition to the Ely Fire Brigade, calls were sent out for the Cambridge Borough Police and the Littleport Fire Brigade. It was about 12:30 when the fire was detected, and the call for the assistance of the Ely Fire Brigade was made at 12:57, and four minutes later, some of the of the Brigade were actually in the station.

At eight minutes past one, the fireman left Ely and at 1:20 they had arrived at the Beet Factory, despite the fact that they were held up for a few minutes at one of the railway crossings. Before their arrival, men at the factory were playing jets of water on the outbreak, but as soon as the City Brigade reached the seat of the conflagration, they worked with wonderful energy, and succeeded in preventing the flames from setting fire to an adjoining canteen.

The chief officer of the brigade, (Colonel G L Archer), and Second Officer H Sedgwick, were in charge, and when it was seen that there was no hope of saving the burning building, they concentrated their attention upon preventing the next hut from meeting a similar fate.

The work of the Brigade was as highly efficient as it could possibly be, and although the electric lights had been burnt out by the blaze, they stuck commendably to their task, and had the fire under control just as the flames were spreading across a corridor which connected the gutted canteen with a similar structure.

So hurriedly had the occupants to leave the premises that they were unable to save any of their personal belongings, which were swallowed up in the fury of the fire, the heat from which was so intense that it cracked the whole of the windows in the adjoining canteen, and completely scorched the woodwork of one side of it. Some idea of how intense were the flames may be gained from the fact that the whole structure was destroyed in a matter of 20 minutes. Inside was a dog with three puppies, and, anxious as Mr Littleboy and his son were to save these, this was rendered impossible by the blaze, and all four perished.

George Littleboy, who is a nephew of the canteen manager, with whom he was spending the weekend, and was to have returned to his home on Monday morning, had a miraculous escape from being trapped in the fire. He was asleep in one of the cubicles at the time the fire was discovered, but was caught by the flames and a dense volume of smoke.

Because of this, he was unable to make his escape through the entrance, and, turning back, forced himself through a small window. He was, however, unable to do this until after his hands, feet and face were severely burned. He was immediately taken to an adjoining canteen, where he received first-aid treatment pending the arrival of Doctor G B Davis, who dressed his injuries and ordered his immediate removal to Addenbrookes Hospital, whence he was conveyed in Messrs Cass and Company’s ambulance.

It was 2:10 am, when the Cambridge Fire Brigade reached Ely, having encountered a thick fog on the way. It was stopped at the Ely police station, where it was informed that the Ely Brigade had had the fire under control since 1:40 am, and that its services would not be required. The engine then returned to Cambridge.

Too much praise cannot be given to the Ely Fire Brigade, the members of which responded to the call in remarkably quick time, and won the admiration of everyone at the factory for the

efficient manner in which they prevented the spread of the outbreak. Had they not prevented the flames from reaching other huts in the vicinity, the consequences may have been very serious.

The cause of the outbreak is not known, neither is the extent of the damage, which must be considerable. Everything in the canteen was destroyed.

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Our own Sugar.

A tour of the Ely Factory described.

By “Farmer”

The Lincoln, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury, Friday, December the 30th, 1927.

How many of our readers, I wonder, give one thought as to where the sugar they take in their cup of tea at breakfast comes from. Probably, but very few, and the majority of those who picture it as being grown in the West Indian plantations, and tended carefully by the dusky hands of negroes, while they sing plantation songs!

They do not realise that much of the sugar being consumed today in this country, makes no journey across blue waters to reach their table, but grows in the fields, that many of them pass in the train as they go to business.

It is a well-established industry nowadays, this sugar beet growing, and there are nineteen factories busily at work for any period from three to four months in the year, dealing with the beet crop, –a short season, but a busy one, for from October until the last week in December, (and, if the crops are very heavy, into January), the machinery at the factories is never idle, night or day, Sunday's and week-days, too.

A few years ago, if one had been told that sugar would be extracted from roots in this country, I think the statement would have been disbelieved, but now, so greatly has the new industry taken on this country, that in October alone 715,098 hundred-weights of home-grown sugar were manufactured.

Marvellous machinery.

To visit one of the big factories is an education in itself, and when an opportunity occurs it should not be missed on any account, for the wonderful process is something to marvel at. The idea of extracting sugar from beet is not an English one, having been discovered as long ago as 1747 in Berlin.

The first factory was built in 1801 near Breslau, and it is only during the last few years, when farming came to such a state of depression, that the attempt to establish it firmly in this country was made, and has now succeeded.

The sugar beet crop is grown on the soils most suited to it, just like any ordinary root crop, but it requires a little better manuring than the ordinary, swedes, turnips, or mangolds. When ripe, which is in October or the end of September, these roots are raised by means of special implements, which loosen the soil around the long tap root, and this enables it to be pulled up by hand, preparatory to the loading on lorries, which convey the beet to the railway, or to barges if the canals are utilised.

The writer recently visited the largest and best equipped of the beet sugar factories, at Ely, where most of the work in handling the roots is done by utilising water power.

As the lorries laden with beet arrive at this factory, they back into a special little siding, and a powerful stream of water is directed on the lorry. This washes the beet with great force out of the lorry, (getting rid of most of the clinging soil) and into the silos; thence they travel by water to the mammoth pump, which elevates them into the beet washer, whence they travel to the automatic weigher, where they fall into the cutting mill, a very powerful machine that slices the roots as they move along.

By this time the beet has lost all appearance of a root, and is merely a mass of shreds. These are hastened through the great presses, where a certain proportion of the juice is extracted. On leaving the presses, the slices are conveyed to the diffusion batteries, around which they make a circuit, while the rest of the sugar is extracted in solution.

A mass of wet pulp remains after this process is completed, and this goes into a trough below the batteries, thence to the pulp elevator, on to the pulp presses, and from there to the pulp driers. After being blown through a large pipe into the pulp store, the pulp is bagged up, and, being an excellent food for farm livestock, it is ready for sale.

Meanwhile, the raw juice that has been extracted is measured in the measuring tanks, and proceeds to the lime mixers, where quicklime is mixed with it for purification purposes.

The next process is to pass this limed juice through the carbonating tanks, where carbonic acid gas is pumped through it, this causing the greater proportion of the impurities to form insoluble compounds. This carbonated juice is now forced through filter presses, and these remove the compounds. It is then re-heated and again carbonated and filtered to get rid of all lime. Now it is time that the juice was re-christened, so it is known as thin juice, and passes through bag filters, whence it travels to the sulphitation tanks, for the removal of still remaining impurities.

A stream of snow-white crystals.

The evaporators now come into play, and here, all water is evaporated off, making the thin juice into thick juice. This thick juice is now boiled in a vacuum or boiling press, (pans), and becomes “massecuite.” This compound falls into the crystallisers, where the sugar crystallisation process is continued.

Finally, the sugar is separated out of the massecuite in the centrifugal’s, and is conveyed to the granulator, thence to the sugar bins, and into the bagging machine. Down this funnel, and into the sack held open to receive it, pours a perfect flood of snow-white crystals, and anyone watching this process is keenly aware of the nature of the crystals, by the sweet taste on his lips. The bags are fastened up, conveyed to the store, and the sugar-making process is complete.

Much of the labour in the factories is done by the Dutch, who have a special knowledge of this type of industry, but home-born labour is growing more skilled, and is now largely employed. Trying work, it is, while it lasts, for the heat of the huge boilers is very great, and the smell of sugar and chemicals, is very penetrating. Many of the workmen perform their duties stripped to the waist. It takes but a brief while to manufacture the sugar from the raw material, thanks to the up-to-date process now employed, and it is possible to see the beet travel into the factory and emerge the other end as sugar within a very few hours.

Some of the well-established factories are making good profits. The balance sheet of the Bury Saint Edmunds factory, shows a profit for 1926-27 of £153,782, while that at Ely made £55,250.

It is hoped that this new industry will be the means of keeping more people on the land, and preventing the flow to the towns.

Brigg Factory erection to be completed for 1928 Sugar Beet crop.

It is officially announced that Messrs. Stewart and Partners Limited, of London, Belfast and Dublin, have obtained the contract, amounting to over £350,000 for the erection of a beet sugar factory at Brigg. The factory will be capable of slicing 1,000 tons of beet per twenty-four hours, and during the three months working season from October to January, will be able to cope with the production of 12,000 acres of land.

The designers of the factory are Hallesche Maschinesfabrik, of Halle, Saxony. The machinery is to be of the latest design and not less than 75 percent, will be manufactured in this country, in accordance with government regulations.

Preliminary working on the site has begun, and the work of construction proper will begin early in the new year. This will occupy about seven months, so that the factory should be completed in time for the 1928 beet crop in October.

The county interest on the directorate is represented by Sir Berkeley Sheffield, Member of Parliament, Major Hoult, Deputy Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, and Colonel O Sutton-Nelthorpe.

Spalding Sugar Factory.

Owing to the frost having delayed operations, the Spalding beet sugar factory expects to run into the first week of January. Notices sent out to growers at the week-end, request them to complete deliveries by that time.

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Sugar Beet in East Anglia.

Demands on Labour.

The South-West Suffolk Echo, Saturday, January the 14th, 1928.

Writing on the subject of land sales in 1927, Messrs. Bidwell and Sons, chartered surveyors, of Cambridge and Ely, say: “Undoubtedly sugar beet growing and the Ouse Drainage are two factors which are very materially affecting agricultural land in the Eastern Counties.

We think that, in spite of the new price arrangement provisionally made with the factories, a very large area of sugar beet will again be grown this year.

On the high lands, the sugar content has, in many cases, proved higher than was anticipated, although it has been very low in the case of certain of the Fen lands.

Although we cannot believe that farmers are obtaining anything like their fair share of the benefits of the subsidy, we think that sugar beet on the light lands, anyhow, will still show much better results than any other crop, and will still pay in the Fens, although nothing like so well as in the past.

We think it has been very fully realised in the past year, that in considering the net profit per acre made on growing sugar beet, the disorganisation in the ordinary rotation, particularly where sheep are kept, and the absorption of a tremendous amount of labour, just at the season when labour is wanted elsewhere on the farm, must be taken into account. We have heard the proper deduction on this account put as high as two or three pounds per acre, but this must be, to a great extent, guesswork.

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Farmers and Beet.

Advice by Ministry of Agriculture.

A Revenue Producing Crop.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald. Friday, January the 27th, 1928.

“The attitude of some farmers in the areas of the proposed new factories is to wait until seed time is nearer before they decide whether they will put land down to sugar beet or not,” states the Ministry of Agriculture announcement on beet sugar.

“This attitude can be understood, but the Ministry desires to point out that it may be fatal from the grower’s own point of view, as they may find when seed time arrives, that the promoters of the new group of factories will have withdrawn their offers”.

“Farmers in the new areas who intend to grow sugar beet this year are advised, therefore, to sign their contracts at once”.

In October 1927, it is pointed out, the Minister of Agriculture was informed from responsible quarters that finance had been secured for the erection in 1928, of a group of four new beet sugar factories in Lincolnshire, Somersetshire, Bedfordshire, and Staffordshire respectively, subject to sufficient guarantees by farmers, of an adequate acreage of sugar beet to support the factories being forthcoming. Each factory would require a minimum of about 10,000 acres of sugar beet.

“In the Ministry's view, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that sugar beet is a direct revenue-producing crop, and that an extension of its acreage is calculated to exercise a stabilising effect on the acreage, and consequently on the price, of another very important crop, potatoes”.

“Sugar beet has the further advantage, that it can replace mangolds and turnips in the rotation without detriment to the supplies of animal food”.

“Turning to a review of last season's crops, farmers will appreciate that, in spite of the bad year for agriculture generally, sugar beet suffered relatively less than most other crops, and in some cases was the only paying crop grown.

Many farmers in the established beet growing areas are at present receiving their cheques from the factories for last year's crop, and may in some cases be able to give a personal confirmation to this statement”.

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National Farmers Union.

Peterborough Branch and the Problem of Rejected Sugar Beet.

Nearly 200 Growers Affected.

The Peterborough and Hunts Standard, Friday, February the 10th, 1928.

Alderman F W Griffin presided at the monthly meeting of the Peterborough County Branch of the National Farmers Union, held at the Agricultural Offices on Saturday.

Other members present were: Messrs. W. Hemmant, (vice-chairman), J Bradshaw, H F Coles, V H Bettinson, R E Dowse, J M Sergeant, C W Godfrey, W S Smith, A E Law, H J Tate, T Berry, J H Horrell, J H Mackinson, F M Odam, C W Brown, C Neaverson, A J Berridge, S M Egar, J T Briggs, W R Odam, A Crane, W Hadman, W J Thompson, with the secretary, (Mr. R Bibby).

The secretary intimated that the resolution forwarded to headquarters, regarding the burden of local taxation, would be brought before the Parliamentary Committee at their next meeting. The views of the branch as the prohibition of the removal of poultry in areas within two miles of any outbreak of foot and mouth disease, was also being brought before the council at headquarters.

Truck Shortage.

The secretary reported that he had been in communication with the railway authorities with regard to the shortage of trucks on the Midland and Great Northern joint line. Recently, he said, the position became very serious, for notwithstanding the fact that due notice was given to the railway company, that trucks would be needed for the transport of certain goods, no trucks were available for several days.

One day as many as 35 farm wagons had to return to the farms from one station without having unloaded. He was pleased to state however, that following the reports to the company, the shortage had been obviated.

Railway Rates.

A letter was presented from the goods manager of the Southern Area of the London and North Eastern Railway, stating that arrangements had been made to retain several of the exceptional rates for Peterborough to Brentford and Hornsey markets for potatoes.

Several members commented on the inequality of railway rates from Peterborough for certain goods. It was pointed out that the rate of transit for ten tons of potatoes was more than double the price charged for bricks. The secretary was instructed to make inquiries regarding this matter.

Rejected Sugar Beet.

The chairman stated that the Sugar Beet Committee of the branch had met on two occasions since the last Executive Committee meeting, consequent on the rejection, or partial rejection of consignments of beets by the Peterborough Beet factory, as a result of the beets damaged by frost. Mr Griffin mentioned that approximately 170 to 180 growers were affected in this respect, whilst the tonnage of beet was rather considerable.

It had been decided by the Sugar Beet Committee to appoint a special committee consisting of Mr Griffin, Mr Hemmant, Mr H.A. Whittome, Mr J.T. Briggs and Mr A.J. Berridge to meet the factory representatives and discuss the cases where beets had been wholly or partially rejected. The special subcommittee had met the factory representatives and drawn up a questionnaire which had been dispatched to all growers concerned.

The chairman added that on the return of the questionnaire, the subcommittee would meet again, and each individual transaction would be considered. He hoped the subcommittee would eventually be able to secure the redress for the members affected when the cases were dealt with.

Imported Skimmed Milk.

There was some discussion regarding the importation of machine skimmed condensed milk, and the absence of any supervision with which the milk was produced abroad. It was stated that the imports of skimmed milk were up by 112 percent, as compared with 1921, whilst the imports of condensed milk in 1927 was equivalent to 77 million gallons of raw milk.

It was pointed out that the increase of imports was attributable to the policy of imposing statutory burdens upon the home producer, without any steps being taken to require that the imported commodity should be accompanied by a certificate, showing that it had been produced under proper conditions and supervision. The secretary stated that from statistics received over 423,000 known outbreaks of foot and mouth disease occurred on the continent in 1927, to say nothing of the cases not reported.

Other Topics.

It was decided to make representations to headquarters, for a further reduction of Capitation fees, in view of the large number of smallholder members in the branch.

A questionnaire was presented from headquarters, requesting information of the methods adopted by butchers, in purchasing in the local market. It was decided to leave the completion of the questionnaire in the hands of Mr. J.M. Sergeant and Mr. R E Dowse.

Correspondence was presented showing that the “raid” on the road fund for 1926-27 was about £7,000,000, and this year it was expected to reach £12,000,000. It was pointed out that in addition, the Chancellor of the Exchequer “raided” one third of the net proceeds of the licensing duties on light vehicles, the annual amount of which was £4,000,000.

Blunham Sugar Factory Scheme.
To the Editor, “Peterborough Standard”.

Sir, I shall be grateful if you will grant me space in your paper to inform the farmers that we regret that the option granted by the Bedfordshire Sugar Company, Limited, to finance, construct, erect and put into working order the proposed beet sugar factory at Blunham to Messrs. Sugar Industry Auxiliaries, Limited, was not exercised because the necessary acreage of beet was not forthcoming by the required date.

So that those farmers who wish to grow beet for the coming season may do so, this company has forwarded a list of names and addresses of those who signed provisional contracts to the following existing beet sugar factories;
United Sugar Company, Limited, Bury Saint Edmunds.
Central Sugar Company, Limited, Peterborough.
2nd Anglo Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Felstead.
Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ely.
Lincolnshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited, Bardney.

We recommend that the freight from the farm to the respective factory must be considered by each farmer before he signs a contract.
Yours faithfully.
For and on behalf of Bedfordshire Sugar Company, Limited.
(Signed), H Trustram Eve, Chairman.
34 Upper Baker Street, London, North West 1, 1st February,1928.

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Some Sugar Factories.

Big Profits.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald. Friday, June the 8th, 1928.

In their first report, the directors of the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory state that the factory has worked satisfactorily in its first manufacturing season. After deducting all charges, including preliminary expenses of £4,715 and placing £713 to general reserve, a net profit of £45,000 is shown by the accounts, which is to be applied to the payment of a dividend of 10 percent, free of tax.

Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The report of the Ely Beet sugar factory for the year ended March 31st, states that contracts were made with 2,760 growers for 22,492 acres of sugar beet, and that a further 2,776 acres from 867 growers in the West of England were accepted by the company.

The average sugar content of the beet received was 15.13 percent, (against 16.17 percent). Growers received for their beet an average price of 53 shillings, 1 penny per net ton delivered, being 10 shillings per ton in excess of the minimum, laid down in the Subsidy Act of 1925. After providing for income tax and depreciation, etc, and transferring £46,211 to general reserve (against £60,423), a surplus is shown for the year of £56,250, (the same), which is again to be disposed of in the payment of a dividend of 12 and a half percent. free of tax, on the Ordinary shares.

Lincolnshire Sugar Company.

The net profits of the Lincolnshire Beet Sugar Company for the period from January 19th, 1927, to March 31st last, were £94,120, after providing for debenture interest.

A dividend at the rate of 7 percent per annum is proposed on the Cumulative Participating Preference shares, adding £25,000 to the depreciation fund, and £18,000 to the Income-tax account, writing £25,000 off formation expenses, and carrying forward £1483.

English Beet Sugar.

The net profit of the English Beet Sugar Company for the year ended March 31st were £100,000, after adding £69,925 to the reserve fund, and a dividend of 20 percent tax free is proposed on the Ordinary shares.

For 1926-27 the distribution was similar to that now announced, and £156,067 was transferred to the reserve.

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“The Newest Enterprise.”

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, June the 15th, 1928.

At the first annual general meeting of the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, recently held, the chairman of the company, (Sir James Martin), referred with pride, to “the newest enterprise of the Anglo Dutch group.” The company, unlike companies providing the earlier factories, has not had the opportunity to write down its factory cost at the rate which otherwise it might have done.

But it is interesting to note, that there are no debentures, that the sum at which the factory stands in the balance-sheet is less by £22,000 than the share capital on which a dividend of 10 percent free of tax has been paid.

Sir James Martin briefly referred in his statement to the difficulties incidental to the financing and building in our midst of this latest factory, and made it clear that the factory would not have been built but for the enterprise of a small group of English capitalists, cooperating with Dutch colleagues. The very large net profits made in 1926, by practically all the companies controlling the beet sugar factories, and disclosed at the time the companies were driving a very hard bargain with the National Farmers Union over the price of the raw material, combined to create strong resentment in agricultural circles, and was, to say the least, disquieting to the taxpayer, furnishing the subsidy.

The profits made in 1927, and now disclosed, show very satisfactory working results from the company’s point of view, but apparently, they are not on such a scale as to revive in an acute form the feeling of unfairness then shared alike by the farmers and their labourers. The Ipswich factory is paying a dividend of twelve and a half percent, and the corporation owning the Cantley Factory, while not disclosing the rate of dividend for the past year, states that the dividends over the sixteen years of the factory’s history, including last year, averaged six percent. In most of the factories, large sums are being placed to reserves.

At Ely, –the largest factory in the country, --the created reserves total £142,701. At Ipswich, the capital cost of the factory stands at £350,000. Of that figure, it is remarked that it still exceeds the corresponding figures appearing in the balance-sheet of Continental sugar factories, of similar capacity. That beet-sugar factory finance, needs skill and foresight, and that the business is highly technical will be admitted. But generally speaking, it is open to question whether a financial policy of extreme caution, which tends to grind the face of the grower of beet, is justified, and whether the policy of writing down capital costs during the subsidy years, is not being carried to an extreme point.

Turning again to the Lynn factory, it is satisfactory to note that the average sugar content, (16.85 percent), was higher than the average for the country, higher than Ipswich, and no less than 1.72 percent higher than Ely.

It is the sugar-content that matters in association with a good crop. The 700 growers who delivered beet to the local factory are painfully aware that last season was the worst beet season on record. For the country, the average yield of washed and topped beet delivered, did not exceed six and a half tons per acre. The King's Lynn factory paid an average price of 54 shillings and 4 pence, the Ely factory 53 shillings and 1 penny. Notwithstanding adverse results last year, many of the factory’s report that the general level of beet cultivation showed an improvement over previous years.

Growers in West Norfolk, as elsewhere. Have to face up to a lower basic price for the current and following years. Nevertheless, it is hoped that these improved methods combined with a brighter season and a higher sugar-content will bring a much better return on the larger acreage which has been drilled this year

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Ely Accommodates England's Greatest Beet Factory.

Promise of record 1928 season.

Employment for 670 men.

Weekly wages bill of nearly £3,000.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, November the 2nd, 1928.

The hodding spade which cut the first sod on the site of the Ely Beet sugar factory at Turbutsea Farm, Adelaide, Ely on October the 7th 1924, now reposes in the General Manager's office, its blade silver-plated and its handle white and polished like ivory, a fine trophy, and a permanent reminder of a great enterprise which has since justified itself.

How few local people ever believed, or could have imagined, the outcome of the lifting of that first sod, or visualise the scene today when a marshy and dyke-threaded piece of land has been transformed, as by magic, into the site of a vast set of buildings, fine hard roads, a 200-yards long quay, and four and a half miles of railway sidings?

But those that conceived the whole scheme, and the farmers that supported them, were obviously men of foresight, determination and faith, characteristics without which nothing really big has ever been achieved or maintained.

Happy over the results so far achieved, and confident of the future, the Factory authorities are not resting from their labours. They are forging on towards greater efficiency and economy, and still further important developments of the business.

Those familiar with the appearance of the Factory at the opening of its first campaign will realise the rate of development of this, the greatest and most wonderfully equipped sugar beet factory in England, when they contrast it with the structure of today. Important improvements to facilitate the smooth working of the industry have been effected both inside and out, and to stand on practically any of the main roads leading to Ely today and glance in the direction of Adelaide, not a greatly imaginative mind is necessary to appreciate that an enormous concern is in full swing.

On every road, as well as by rail, there is a constant and daily stream of traffic conveying many thousands of tons of this product of the soil into the Factory, where, after passing through what, to the lay mind, is a bewildering process, it is converted into granulated sugar of the highest quality.

Starting its fourth campaign on October the 5th, the factory is now in full swing. One of the sights of this mammoth hive of industry is to stand near one of the flumes and watch the beet shot from the motor lorries by water guns, which not only help to cleanse them, but which speed them on their way into the Factory. With the terrific rush of water passing through these guns, a giant motor vehicle is released of its burden in the matter of a couple of minutes.

Nightly, gangs of barges, headed by their little snorting tugs, like long black sea serpents, are creeping from out of the dark and mist of the river into the full light of the busy quay, to be discharged of their cargoes by the ever-working crane, and strong piece workers below it.

No less inactive is the railway. Both day and night, train load after trainload shunts in from a series of railway lines, which must be unequalled, in any other beet sugar factory in England. Here it is, perhaps, well to mention, that not only do great quantities of beet coming by rail, all sugar, dried pulp and molasses go out by the same means. The highly efficient manner in which this giant traffic is handled is a matter for congratulation to the local station master and his staff, as well as to the factory's rail staff.

While speaking of transport, it is worthy of mention that road deliveries have been remarkably large this year, over 1,300 tons gross being delivered a day. In this connection, an amusing story is furnished. The factory offered £1 to the man who bought in the thousandth ton of beet. The man to whom this distinction belonged, was informed that he was wanted in the office.

Hearing that he had done something wrong, he faced the manager with extreme reluctance. Over the desk was passed to him a £1 note, and when he asked what it was for, the surprised recipient was told that it was for bringing in the thousandth ton of beet. His disconsolate face turned into a broad smile as he made this admission: "Well, I blowed. That's a bit of luck. I have been in the ditch and that made me late."

The Factory is developing its system of water transport, which is run on highly efficient lines. On the Continent, the transport of beet by water is a common practice, and in some cases barges as large as 600 tons capacity are used, ninety percent of the total crop being brought to the factory by that means. In England, few of the factories are adjacent to navigable waterways, and none on rivers sufficiently deep and far reaching to allow for the use of water transport on a large scale.

However, the Ely factory receives a considerable quantity of beet by water and is developing that side of its business on account of it having proved satisfactory to many growers on the fens, who are cut off from convenient rail or road transport. The Ely factory has gone into water transport to a greater extent than any other, owing to its central position on the River Great Ouse, and its tributaries, the Cam, the Old West, Lark and Little Ouse, navigating over 100 miles. It's barges also go further afield. Into the Old Bedford, Hundred Foot and Well Creek waterways.

The growth of the industry and the development of water transport can easily be appreciated when one travels in different parts of the Isle. Dumps are established on the river banks, and towards these, streams of vehicles flow with their loads, and these are tipped with expedition into the waiting barges, which are rapidly sped away to the Factory by these powerful little motor tugs. Where there happens to be a suitable quay, some growers are using a mechanical conveyor to carry the beet into the barges. The unloading of these into the flumes at the Factory is generally carried out by grab cranes, and with greatly experienced men on the job, this is done quickly and efficiently.

After viewing the enormous flumes which accommodate the beet before it passes into the Factory, the particularly interesting part of a visit to this place comes. As you pass through the main entrance to the Factory, where all is brightness and intense activity, one realises that no one but an engineer could possibly appreciate to the full, what a network of machinery such as meets his gaze, needs in maintenance and careful attention.

Further, he must find it tremendously difficult to appreciate the mass of process through which the beet pass, before eventually coming out at the opposite end of the Factory to which they

went in, as the very best of granulated sugar. Almost every inch of floor space and right up to the top of the towering glass roof is a mass of machinery, and as scores of men watch every movement, they look like mere specks.

The processes employed in the manufacture of sugar are so highly technical, that the lay mind would not appreciate a full description of them, but it is possible to conceive, what highly efficient machinery is required to use about 2,300 tons of beet each day, from the time the campaign opens, until it closes, up to the end of December.

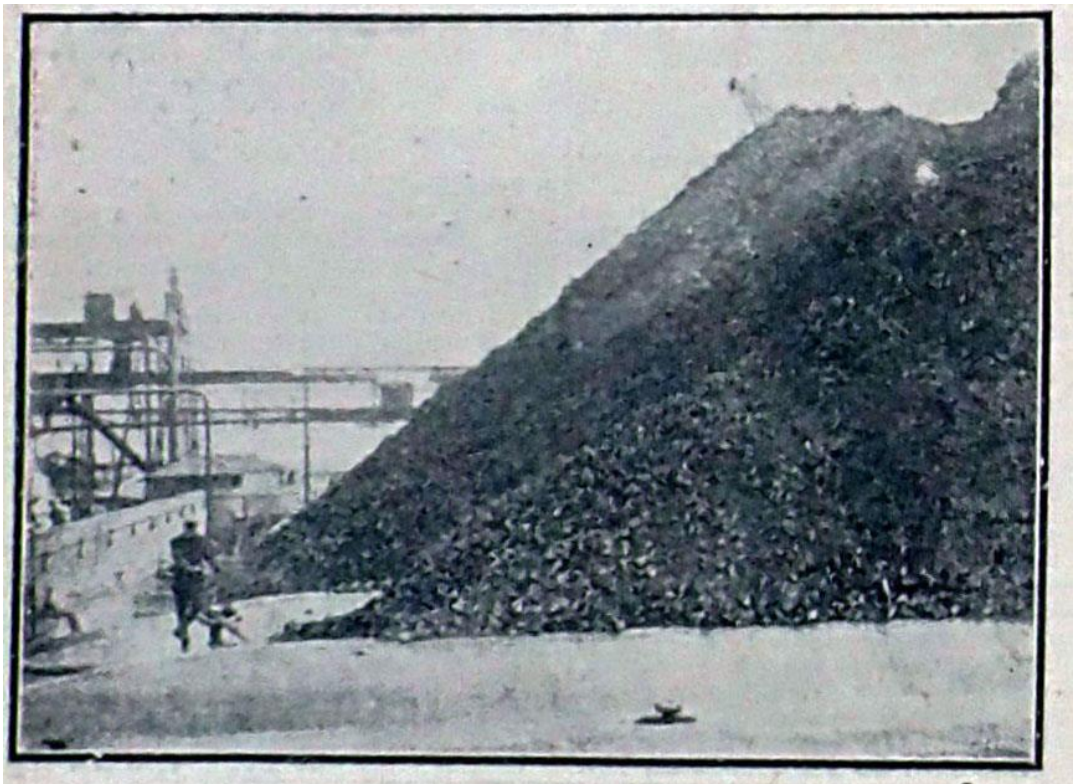
This is what is being accomplished at this Factory. The Ely factory, which cuts the greatest number of beets of any factory in the country, finds employment for 670 men, night and day throughout the campaign, and pays a weekly wages bill of over £2,900. Last year, the factory produced about 24,000 tons of sugar.

It is satisfactory to know that about fifty percent of the men engaged inside the factory this season, have been regular campaign workers for some years past.

Growers will learn with satisfaction that, with some exceptions, the sugar content. In the beets arriving at the Factory this season is considerably higher than last year, and so far, the dirt tare has been below the average. The weight of beet per acre also appears to be higher on an average, so the Factory hopes to cut an excess of beets above even last year's great tonnage.

Five photographs and captions below accompanied the above newspaper report.

The first photograph shows a beet heap in the flumes ready to be washed into the Factory. Caption reads: This is one of the great flumes stacked with beet. On the left, a workman is seen operating a water gun, which assists in washing the beet into the Factory.

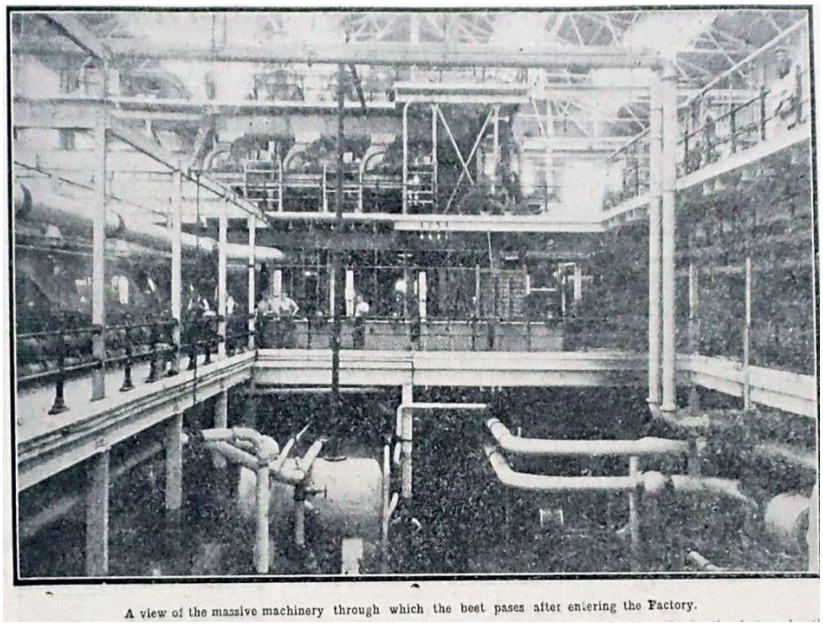


This is one of the great flumes stacked with beet. On the left a workman is seen operating a water gun which assists in washing the beet into the Factory.

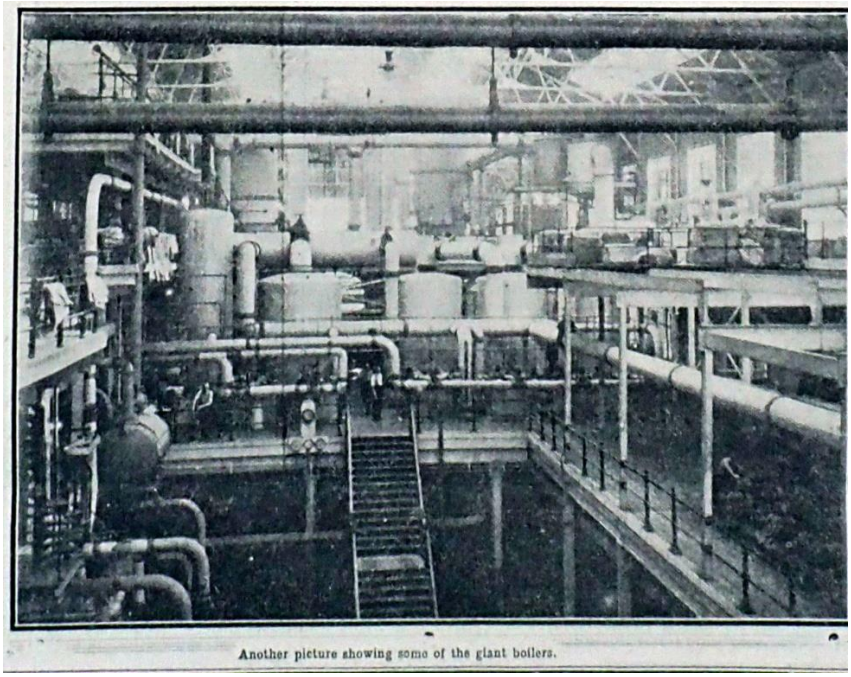
The second and third photographs below are taken from the inside of the factory, and the captions read:

A view of the massive machinery through which the beet passes after entering the Factory.

Another picture showing some of the giant boilers.

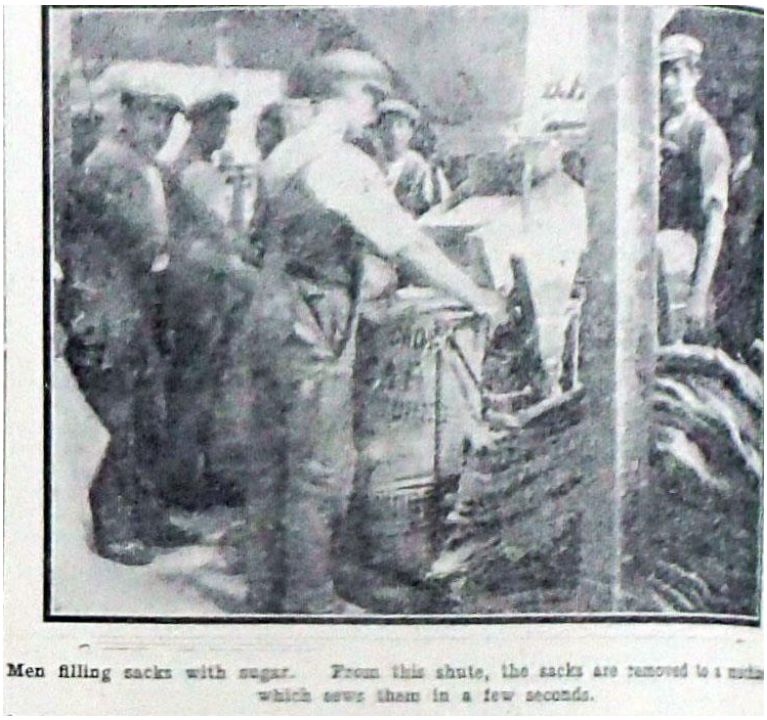


A view of the massive machinery through which the beet pases after entering the Factory.

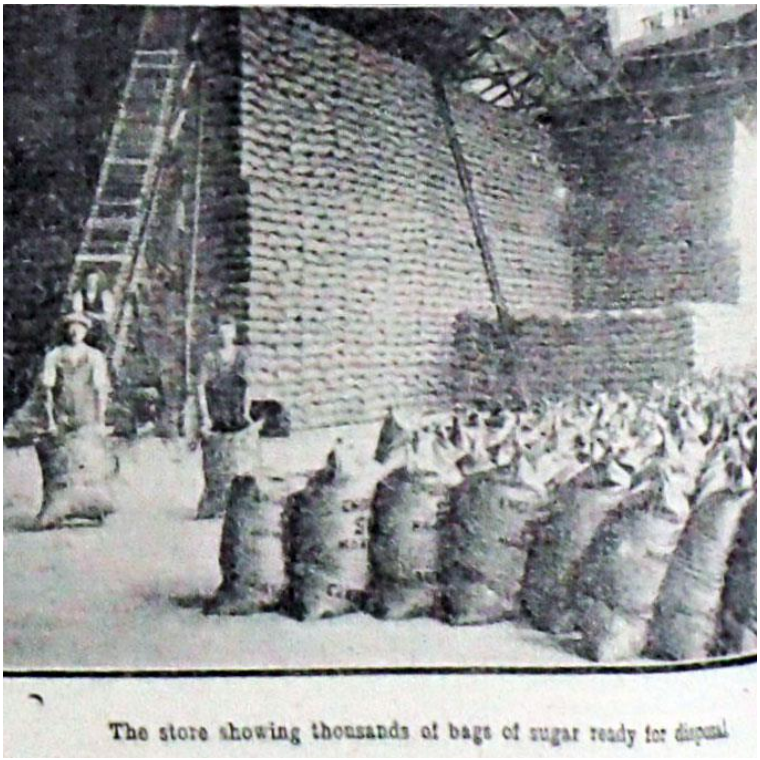


Another picture showing some of the giant boilers.

The fourth and fifth photographs show: The filling and stitching of the sugar sacks, and the bags stacked in the sugar store. The captions read: Men filling sacks with sugar. From this shute, the sacks are removed to a machine which sews them in a few seconds, and, the store showing thousands of bags of sugar ready for disposal.



Men filling sacks with sugar. From this shute, the sacks are removed to a machine which sews them in a few seconds.



The store showing thousands of bags of sugar ready for disposal

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Fire at Ely Factory.

The Saffron Walden Press and News, Friday, November the 23rd, 1928.

There were alarming rumours in circulation at Ely on Friday of a serious fire at Ely beet Sugar Factory. Inquiries, however, showed that the outbreak was only of a minor character.

Owing to the gale, the fired soot of one of the chimneys was blown down onto the pulp at the bottom, and this became ignited. Every precaution was taken to prevent a spread, and the Ely Fire Brigade, under Mr. H Sedgwick, was called out about 7 o'clock, and had orders to stand by in case of emergency. At 10 o'clock, the building was reported safe.

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River Pollution.

Ouse and Cam Fishery Board suggest conference.

Rivers board for the Ouse?

The Saffron Walden Press and News, Friday, December the 25th 1928.

One of the principal items discussed at the quarterly meeting of the Ouse and Cam Fishery Board, was the report of the Joint Advisory Committee on River Pollution. This committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Horace Monro, K.C.B., was appointed by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, "to report on the position with regard to the pollution of rivers and streams, and on any legislative, administrative, or other measures which appear to them desirable for reducing such pollution," and in its first report it calls attention to the fact that it is possible, under the law as it stands at present, for the Minister of Health, on the application of any one of the County Councils or county boroughs, through whose jurisdiction a river passes, to set up a Rivers Board, to control the whole length of the river, including its tributaries, so far as it is subject to the Rivers Pollution Prevention Acts.

Doctor C F Searle, (chairman) presided, and those present included: Alderman H G Few, (Cambs County Council), Alderman W Wood Horn, (Hunts County Council), Major James Deane, (Bedfordshire Ouse Preservation Society), Messrs. J O Manton, (Buckingham), H L Bradfer-Lawrence, (Norfolk), F Hudson, (Huntingdon), W J Gadd, (District Inspector, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries), and the clerk, (Mr. G H Lewis). Apologies were received from Alderman L H Luddington, (Isle of Ely), Alderman G C Walker, (Bedfordshire County Council), Sir Cecil Neuman, (Hertfordshire County Council), Messrs. W J Taylor, (Cambs County Council), P T Chatterton, (Norfolk County Council), E R Pratt, G A Hayes and W B Hunt.

By-laws confirmed.

It was reported that the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries had confirmed the by-laws passed by the Board, and that they were now legally enforceable. These by-laws, among other things, fix the close season for trout fishing as between 15th of September and the 1st of April, and prohibit netting, the use of night lines and bank lines, and the taking of fish below certain prescribed limits. It was decided to print the by-laws on the back of new licences.

Pollution by Sugar Beet Factories.

The Chairman said he regretted to state that, in spite of fresh precautions taken by the factories, and the expenditure of further money on plant to deal with the effluent, serious pollution was being caused by the sugar beet factories, and much damage being done to fish

life. A letter had been addressed to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, calling attention to the facts, and asking what steps were being taken to prevent the continuance of this grave state of affairs. No reply had yet been received to this communication, and on the suggestion of Major Deane, it was resolved to press for an early reply, and to ask what measures were employed in other countries for dealing with the effluent from sugar beet factories.

River's pollution report.

The report of the Joint Advisory Committee on River pollution was considered, together with the circular addressed by the Minister of Health to local authorities, calling the attention of the latter to their existing powers, and suggesting that they should immediately consider the advisability of making an application for the setting up of Rivers Boards for their respective areas.

Alderman H G Few, stated that the County Council association viewed very seriously the question of river pollution, and a resolution on the subject had been passed at its last meeting. It was not merely a case of the fisheries of the country being in danger, but there was also the larger question of the health of the people, since a large number were dependent for their water supplies on our rivers and streams. It also affected farmers and the owners of livestock. Therefore, if the matter was to be dealt with thoroughly, it required the setting up of a body possessing wider powers than those of a Fisheries Board.

Alderman Wood Horn, thought that perhaps one reason why no action had been taken by the local authorities concerned, was because each was waiting to see what the other would do. On the proposition of Major Deane, seconded by Mr J O Manton, it was resolved that a letter to be sent from the Board to all County Councils and County Borough Councils within the area, asking what action they contemplate taking in the matter, and stating that the Board would be willing to act as the convener of a conference of all interested parties.

"A good catch".

The Clerk's report made a reference to the enterprise of one of the honorary water bailiffs of the Board, Mr. G Smallwood, of Bedford, who, hearing that a Pike fishing competition was to take place in his locality, made it his business to attend, and succeeded in disposing of over 70 licences to competitors who did not already possess them.

The report also referred to the valuable services rendered by Mr H W Onion, (of Ely), and Major Fowler of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, who, with a party of men, voluntarily undertook, and successfully carried out the transference from the Roswell pits, Ely, of a number of fish, which would otherwise have been destroyed by the factory effluent.

It was resolved that the thanks of the Board be accorded to each of the persons named.

It was agreed that the meetings of the Board in 1929 be provisionally fixed for the second Friday in each of the months, of March, June, September and December.

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British Sugar Beet Industry.

Present Stage of Development Examined.

(By Alfred Wood, F.C.A., Secretary of the Beet Sugar Factories' Committee.)

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph Trade Supplement, Monday, December the 31st, 1928.

Mr. Alfred Wood.

A photograph of Mr. Alfred Wood.

The past history of the sugar beet industry in this country is now generally known; the long years of pioneer work to convince the country of the value of this crop to agriculture, so amply proved in all other beet growing countries; the efforts to obtain capital for building sugar factories, without which the raw material would have no market; the attempt by the first modern factory at Cantley, to produce home-grown sugar commercially without Government help; the Government's subsequent intervention by sharing the capital risks of the second factory at Kelham; the experience so gained, which convinced the Government of the wisdom of remitting the Excise Duty on sugar; and ultimately the discovery that without stability over a period of years of Government assistance, capital could not be persuaded to assist in the industry.

The British Sugar, (Subsidy) Act, 1925, was then passed with a substantial measure of consent from all political Parties, who recognised the importance of trying out the industry on a national scale.

Period of Education.

In building up the sugar beet industry, there are certain initial disadvantages to be overcome. The manufacturer, in endeavouring to produce sugar commercially in competition with foreign markets, even if he could obtain his raw material at the foreign price, (30 shillings to 35 shillings per ton of beet), requires a margin to meet the cost of his education and experience.

The provider of the raw material, the farmer, in his effort to produce sugar beet commercially, at a profit, must in the early stages require, on the same grounds, a more favourable price than the foreign farmer.

The manufacturer, therefore, has to bear the burden of both these disadvantages which the State subsidy was deliberately designed to meet, so that during the early period of education, organisation, and development, he can maintain the equilibrium of the industry.

The experience of the first four years of the subsidy period, when the State assistance was at its highest rate, namely 19 shillings, 6 pence per hundredweight of sugar produced, and which ended with the growing season of 1927, should show how far the subsidy has secured one of its objects in the provision of sugar factories as markets for the sugar beet grower.

In this connection, the attached table, (Table “A”), prepared from the annual White Paper laid before Parliament in accordance with the Subsidy Act, will be of interest.

TABLE A.
INCREMENTAL PROGRESS OF SUGAR FACTORY CAPITALISATION AND CONSTRUCTION.

| | Including 1924 | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | Total. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factories constructed each year | 3 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| Share capital issued each year | £755,970 | £1,682,538 | £803,520 | £1,235,135 | £4,478,163 |
| Debentures, etc., issued each year | £387,069 | £740,902 | £1,649,019 less £164,765 | | £2,612,225 |
| Other loans issued each year | — | £709,285 less £327,956 | less £270,910 | | £110,419 |
| Capital expenditure each year | £1,016,854 | £3,001,140 | £1,542,057 | £2,186,539 | £7,746,590 |
| Provision for depreciation each year | £69,172 | £110,743 | £424,159 | £746,862 | £1,350,936 |
| Percentage written off to date (cumulative) | 6.8 | 4.2 | 10.7 | 17.5 | 17.5 |
| Factories—cost less depreciation to date | £947,682 | £3,838,079 | £4,955,977 | £6,395,654 | £6,395,654 |

Yield and Sugar Content.

Turning to the operations of these factories, the following figures furnished by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are interesting. It will be noted from the figures (in Table "B") that the quality of the raw material, as shown in the average sugar content, compares favourably with that of foreign countries, but the average yield is disappointing as it is about three tons per acre lower than the average yield abroad.

TABLE B.
BEET SUGAR INDUSTRY IN GREAT BRITAIN.
SUMMARY OF GENERAL RESULTS OBTAINED FOR MANUFACTURING SEASONS 1924-25 TO 1927-28.

| | 1924-25. | 1925-26. | 1926-27. | 1927-28. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acreage under sugar beet | 22,637 | 56,243 | 129,463 | 232,918 |
| Tonnage of beet delivered to factories | 183,713 | 431,185 | 1,117,072 | 1,503,019 |
| Average yield of washed and topped beet per acre (tons) | 8.10 | 7.67 | 8.63 | 6.45 |
| Average price paid per ton of beet | 52s. 4d. | 55s. 6d. | 59s. 5¾d. | 55s. 4½d. |
| Estimated total sum, including transport, paid by factories to growers | £480,000 | £1,196,000 | £3,322,000 | £4,147,000 |
| Average sugar content of beets (per cent.) | 16.65 | 16.36 | 17.31 | 16.12 |
| Total production of sugar (cwt.) | 478,308 | 1,035,672 | 3,069,757 | *3,802,189 |
| Total production of dried pulp (tons) | 7,510 | 21,795 | 62,800 | 91,436 |
| Total subsidy paid (sugar and molasses) | £509,200 | £1,121,581 | £3,325,393 | *£4,214,100 |
| †Total Excise Duty recovered | £229,961 | £370,001 | £1,007,217 | £1,314,784 |

*Subject to slight adjustment.
†Financial year figures. Campaign figures not available.

These averages, however, cannot be accepted without qualification. Many growers have obtained yields which compare with the best foreign experience, namely from 10 to 15 tons per acre and even up to 18 tons. In a new industry, these averages must of course. Include a number of growers who, through lack of experience, or the choice of unsuitable land, have so far been unsuccessful with the crop. Yet it is clear that attention on the growing side must be largely concentrated on the question of the output per acre.

The principal factors to arrive at this result are, deep ploughing, singling at the proper time, (selection in the closely seeded rows of individual young plants to be allowed room to develop), and in the cleaning of the land by hoeing, so that the selected plants may absorb the maximum of the food and moisture in the soil.

Subsidy Reduction.

The second period of the subsidy commenced with the year 1928, when the rate was reduced for three years by 6 shillings and six pence per hundredweight of sugar, with a corresponding reduction in the subsidy on molasses, this reduction being equivalent to about 20 shillings per ton of beet in a normal year. Difficulties not altogether unanticipated have arisen. The

withdrawal of over £1,000,000 per annum from the income of the industry, necessitated a collective bargain with the National Farmers Union as to the fair incidence of this reduction, as between the grower and the factory.

In the new beet contract for the three years, the farmer accepts 8 shillings per ton of the reduction, the factory bearing the remainder with, in addition, as before, all the risk of the sugar market, while at the same time the farmer receives an improved rate of bonus on sugar content, which in a crop of good quality, restores to him a portion of his share of the reduction.

## Reduced Acreage.

Consequently, as in the past growing season, the sugar content in the beets has been exceptionally high, the grower is receiving on the average, almost the same price per ton of beet as he received in 1927, a year of agricultural disappointment generally. It was not unnatural that the effect upon the grower's mind of the bad season of 1927, aggravated by the reduction in the beet price consequent upon the reduction in the rate of subsidy, should have resulted in a reduction in acreage in 1928, the area under the crop being 178,900 acres, or 23 percent less than in 1927, though 40 percent higher than in 1926.

The reduced acreage grown can be attributed not only to these considerations, but also to the fact that, as the subsidy declines, poor growers and poor land are naturally eliminated and recruitment of new growers takes time. The more favourable agricultural conditions this last season, however, have been a tangible encouragement and in consequence additional acreage for 1929 is already being contracted for, although sewing does not take place until next April.

## Industry's Prospects.

With regard to the prospects of the industry, one is able to say definitely that the sugar beet crop has already proved to be a value, if not an essential feature of arable farming in this country, with the same advantages from the standpoint of the grower as have been experienced abroad. It is also a fair assumption that a factory built on a suitable site in a suitable district, will face without undue anxiety, in the present stage of more mature experience, the difficulties and risks of the three years under the present reduced subsidy rate.

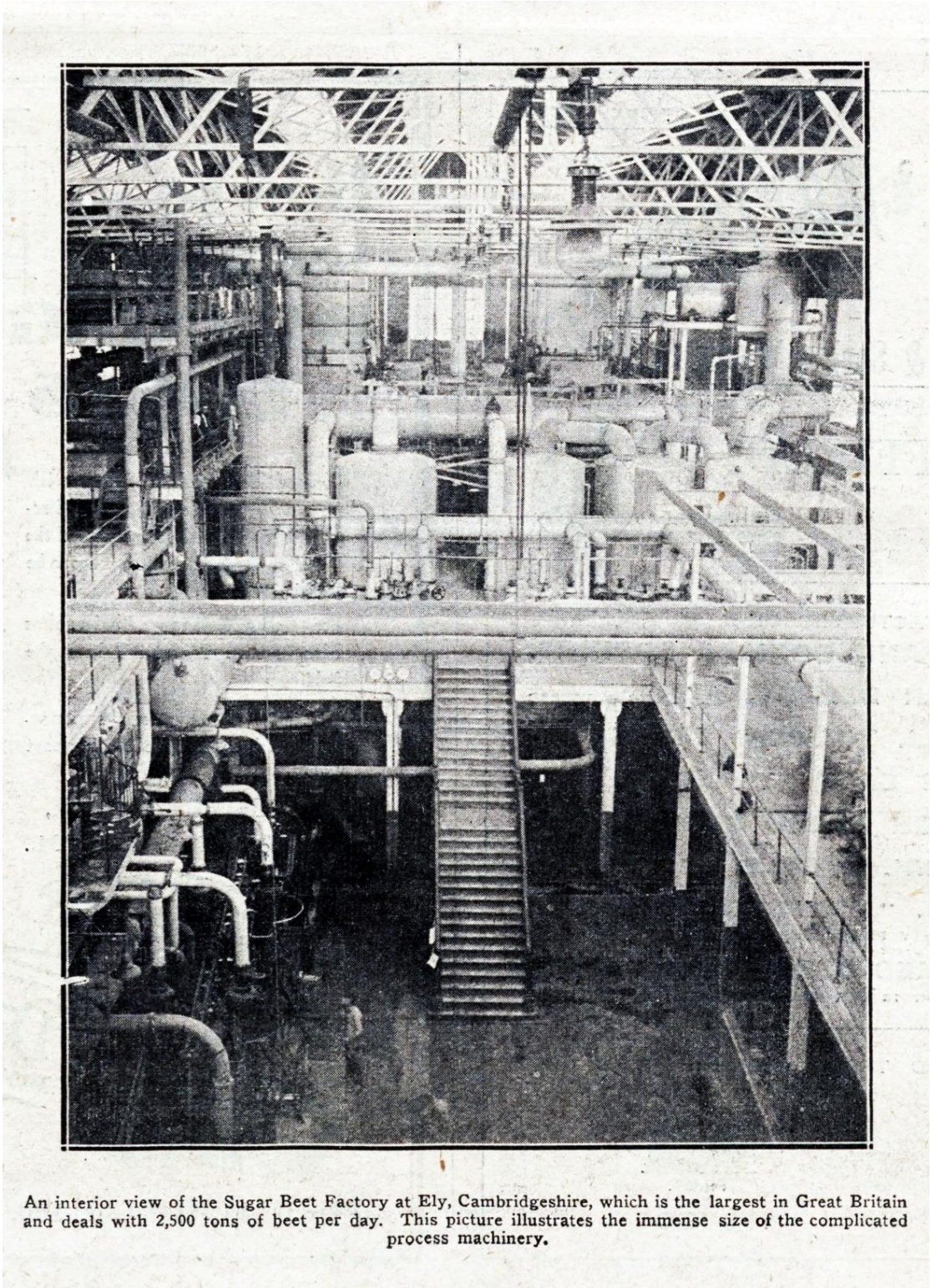
At the moment, the efforts of all concerned are concentrated on achieving the purpose of the Subsidy Act, namely, to ensure that the industry at the end of the ten years period, which expires in 1933, shall continue on permanent lines without further State assistance. Although it is too early to forecast with certainty the economic environment of an industry, the value of who's finished product is determined by world conditions, it is hoped to prove the wisdom of Parliament in deciding that the State assistance shall recede during each period by definite steps, compelling a steady intensification of effort in the direction of economic independence.

## Farmers Broad View.

The subsidy is based on sound principles. Its cost is not concealed. It is paid on the "delivery of the goods," in other words, on concrete evidence that all the practical operations involved, from the preparation of the land to the production of the sugar, have been carried out with due contribution to the volume of knowledge and experience.
The farmer is appreciating the difficulties and intricacies of a large manufacturing business. He is taking the broad and not the parochial view, and is acting in the team spirit, which is vital to this industry. Many growers take a personal interest in their local factory as if it were their own property to be maintained in their joint interest.

Below is a photograph and caption with a view of the interior of the Ely Beet Sugar factory.

Caption reads:
An interior view of the Sugar Beet Factory at Ely, Cambridgeshire, which is the largest in Great Britain and deals with 2,500 tons of beet per day. This picture illustrates the immense size of the complicated process machinery.



An interior view of the Sugar Beet Factory at Ely, Cambridgeshire, which is the largest in Great Britain and deals with 2,500 tons of beet per day. This picture illustrates the immense size of the complicated process machinery.

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Countryside News in Brief.

The Lynn News and County Press, Tuesday, February the 5th, 1929.

At a meeting of the Cambridgeshire County Council, the Local Government and General Purposes Committee, reported that the river at and below Ely had been blocked for half a mile, with refuse from the Ely Sugar Factory, and that the Ouse Drainage Board's attention had been drawn to the obstruction.

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The Riddle of Dead Fish River.

John Bull, Saturday, March the 2nd, 1929.

The River Ouse is poisoned, and for a period of years there has been agitation levied against both the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Health in a, so far, futile effort to protect those residents, who have to rely upon the river water for drinking purposes.

The fish: --Bream, Roach, Pike, Perch and Eels, --are being systematically slaughtered. There are days when their dead and dying bodies float on the surface.
A post mortem on several of the casualties, has revealed the fact that a furry substance has grown in their gills.

So serious has the matter become that Mr. A F Meadows, of the Ouse and Cam Fishing Board, and Water Bailiff to the Ouse and its tributaries, is on the point of resigning.
He, with many others, is of the opinion that the root of the trouble is the sugar beet factories.

It is conjectured that the discharge of water used in the manufacturing places is responsible for the pollution of the river.

The largest sugar beet factory in the country is situated at Adelaide, on the River Ouse, a mile and a half below Ely.

Another sugar beet factory is situated on the River Lark, which flows into the Ouse, three miles below Ely.

A third Sugar beet factory is on the River Wissey, which joins the Ouse 11 miles below Ely.

Conflicting Opinions.

Officials of these factories contend that there is no proof that the pollution of the river is caused by the water, which is used in their process of making sugar out of beet.

There is, however, the indisputable fact that not even the oldest of the natives of these parts, can ever remember seeing shoals of dead fish in the river, until these factories were erected. Moreover, when the manufacturing campaign ends, in the middle of January, there are no dead fish to be seen, until operations are re commenced in the following autumn.

Again, it is an established fact that gudgeon, are a fish which thrive on sewage and poisonous matter. Before the factories were opened, there were no gudgeon in the river. Now it swarms with them.

Sinister analysis.

So far back as in 1926, the Ely Rural District Council felt constrained to publish a public warning that the river water at Littleport, five miles downriver to Ely, was polluted and unfit for drinking purposes.

An analysis had revealed “organic pollution” and pollution by “sewage matter.”
We might mention that in the outlying districts of Littleport, there is no fresh water supply, and when there is no rain, the residents are dependent upon the river.
The responsible ministries must act. The cause of the river poisoning, whatever it is, must be ascertained and a satisfactory remedy applied without delay.

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Ely Sugar Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald. Friday, April the 12th, 1929

Next week, it is hoped to inaugurate at the Ely Sugar factory the process of sugar refining. If this should prove a success, it will be the means of keeping this great factory active almost the whole year round.

When the whole of the arrangements are complete, and the machinery is set in motion, work will be found for between 200 and 300 men.

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Ouse and Cam Fishery Board.

More Pollution Problems.

The Bedfordshire Times and Independent, Friday, October the 4th, 1929.

An increase in the number of river pollutions, some of which were aggravated by the extended drought, was reported to the Ouse and Cam Fishery Board at its quarterly meeting, held at the Board's offices, at 22 Saint Andrews St, Cambridge, on the 24th of September. The President, Doctor C F Searle, was in the chair, and there were also present Mr Frank Wellham, (Bedfordshire County Council), and Lieutenant Colonel E P S Roupell, (Honorary, Special Water Bailiff).

Beet Sugar Factories.

The Chairman reported that a deputation had attended the Ely beet sugar factory for the purpose of ascertaining what steps the management proposed to take for dealing with its effluent during the coming campaign. Certain measures had been adopted for eliminating solid matter from entering the river, and the settling beds had been improved. At the same time, it was admitted that the effluent which would reach the river would contain solubles, which would make it dangerous to fish life, but which at present there was no known means of getting rid of. With the river also at a very low level, it was impossible to say definitely what the results would be.

It was agreed that the deputation pay a further visit to the Ely factory after it had been working for some while.

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British Sugar Beet Profits.

Bury Saint Edmunds, £93,000. Third highest.

15 Companies Report Successful Year.

The Newmarket Journal, Saturday, October the 5th, 1929.

According to a white paper, issued at the end of last week, Bury Saint Edmunds Sugar Beet Factory made a profit during the last financial year of £93,271 15 shillings and two pence. The Ipswich factory showed a £50,000 profit, while the majority of the remainder of the fifteen subsidised factories show a good balance on the right side. Several of the companies have used their profits to meet depreciation, while others have strengthened their reserves. The balance sheet of the Sugar Beet and Crop Driers Limited, which has an experimental station at Eynsham, shows neither profit nor loss.

Among the assets appears a sum of £249,468 fifteen shillings and two pence, for patents, patent rights and cost of research.

The profits made were: --

English Beet Sugar Corporation, Ltd. (Cantley Factory), £100,000.

Home-grown Sugar, Ltd. (Kelham Factory), £3,125.

Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ltd. (Ely Factory), £56,250.

Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Ltd. (Ipswich Factory), £50,000.

Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Ltd. (Kings Lynn Factory), £36,000.

Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Ltd. (Colwick and Spalding Factories), £97,816, five shillings and four pence.

West Midland Sugar Company, Ltd. (Kidderminster Factory), £69,565, one shilling.

Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Ltd. (York, Poppleton, Felstead and Cupar Factories), £18,528, ten shillings and one penny.

United Sugar Company, Ltd. (Bury Saint Edmunds Factory), £93,271, fifteen shillings and two pence.

British Sugar Manufacturers, Ltd. (Wissington Factory), £27,744, sixteen shillings and eleven pence.

Central Sugar Company, Ltd. (Peterborough Factory), £43,603, ten shillings and three pence.

Yorkshire Sugar Company, Ltd. (Selby Factory), £803, two shillings and ten pence.

Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Ltd. (Allscott Factory), £48,138, thirteen shillings and six pence.

Lincolnshire Beet Sugar Company, Ltd. (Bardney Factory), £11,283, eighteen shillings and six pence.

Second Lincolnshire Beet Sugar Company, Ltd. (Brigg Factory), £6,765, seven shillings and two pence.

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Ely Factory Accident.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald. Friday, October the 18th, 1929.

A shocking accident occurred at the Ely Sugar factory on Thursday. At about noon, a man named Albert Edward Few, whose home is at Thetford Rd, Brandon, and who has been lodging at 12 Broad Street, Ely, was engaged in the repair shop at the factory, when his right leg was caught in the machinery and was severed at the knee.

Doctor F H Beckett, of Ely, and Doctor C W Howe, of Haddenham, were urgently summoned, and the terribly injured sufferer was taken by ambulance to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.

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Downham Rural Council.

The Effluent Problem.

Parish Water Questions.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald. Friday, November the 1st, 1929.

The pollution of the River Ouse and the resultant menace to public health was debated at Friday's meeting of the Downham Rural District Council, Sir Thomas L Hare, presiding, with Mr M Stocks as vice chairman. The pollution is the result of the large quantities of dead fish, which are said to be destroyed by the effluent from the beet factories. The whole question is bound up locally with that of the drinking water supply, as many places are dependent upon the River Ouse.

The medical officer, (Doctor G F Cross), reported that the Ouse was being seriously polluted by dead fish coming down from Southery Ferry. If it were not for the scavenging done by the seagulls, he said, the position would have been even worse. The County Medical officer came down to Denver and saw the position, and he went on to Ely to see the sugar beet factory people about it.

The Chairman said that according to the papers, other authorities were taking it up.

Doctor Cross said he had had Correspondence with the Ouse and Cam Fisheries Board, but nothing had come of it.

The Vice-chairman said that the water in the Wissey was just as bad. He had seen fish of three pounds weight, lying dead, by the banks. The water seemed to have been alright till 12 days ago. Then, quite suddenly it was polluted and became more like a drain. He was also down at 10 Mile Bank recently, and the smell was something awful. It was a most disgraceful state of affairs.

Mr H J Martin asked whether anything could be done. The water in the Ouse was so bad, that their cattle would not drink it. It was not only the Ely beet factory, for there were two other beet factories whose effluent came that way. He was afraid that unless something was done, there would be a very serious outbreak of illness.

Mr W A Buckenham said that there was no doubt that the fish were killed by the effluent and it had been going on for the last three years.

Mr. Martin said he was told that there were some people still drinking this water from the river at Southery, and he thought that they should report the matter to the Minister of Health.

Mr G W Howlett said that there were heaps of people along Ten Mile Bank who had no other supply of water. It smelt terribly as it came out of their pumps.

Mr. Martin inquired whether the Ely water supply could be extended to Ten Mile Bank as he did not like to think that their people were drinking this filthy stuff from the river.

Mr Howlett said that the beet factories and not the parish should be made to pay for the cost, as if the factories were prevented from polluting the river, the water would be quite alright.

The Sanitation Officer, (Captain Rigg), said that the effluent in question was “like blue-black ink,” and consisted largely of sulphuric acid. He had never seen anything like it from sewage farms or anything else. Any action would have to be taken jointly with other authorities, because the Ely factory was in another county. It was agreed to draw the attention of the Ministry of Health to the matter.

Other Matters.

With reference to the question of the extension of the Ely Rural District Councils water mains to Ten Mile Bank, it was decided to ascertain whether they would be willing to consider it and whether the parish would be willing to bear the cost.

With regard to Welney’s water supply, the Sanitation Officer reported that there were no wells in the parishes of Welney and West Welney, and collected rainwater was the main source of supply, though some houses drew their supplies from the rivers. The water question was more acute at Welney than in any other parish in the district. During the recent drought, water had been regularly carted five miles to supply the village. There were 228 houses in the village, with 786 inhabitants. To extend the Ely main, so it would supply 140 houses, would cost £4,488. The remainder of the houses were too scattered to be included.

The Ely District Council had already been applied to with reference to Welney, and it was decided to send the Inspectors report onto the parish council.

A letter was received from the Ely Rural District Council with regard to extending their water mains to supply Southery and Welney. The letter stated that the matter had been referred to their engineer for report. The question of improving a bad corner at Ten Mile Bank, Hilgay, by purchasing a dilapidated cottage and nine. perches of land, (0.05625 of an acre), at the corner was considered, and the Ouse Drainage Board are to be asked how much they want for the property.

Marham Parish Council wrote stating that at a parish meeting it was decided by 47 votes to 13 not to proceed with the water supply scheme owing to the heavy expense.

A letter was also received from Magdalen Parish Council asking the District Council to have the rubbish removed from the enclosure at the village pond. The Sanitation Officer was instructed to have the work done at the expense of the parish, and also to have a notice put up prohibiting the deposit of rubbish there.

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the council agreed to increase the salary of the Sanitation Officer from £450 to £475, the additional £25 being extra allowance for running his car.

The Clerk, (Colonel H R B Wayman), reported that the Ministry of Health had replied that in no case could the old housing subsidy be continued where the contract was not completed by September 30th last. The question of what is to be done about the houses not completed was referred to the Housing Committee.

The RSPCA wrote urging the council to adopt the by-law enforcing the use of the humane killer in slaughterhouses, but the consideration of the matter was deferred.

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Ouse Drainage Board.

Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, November the 1st, 1929.

The minutes of the Works Committee showed that a communication had been received from the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, asking whether the Board have any objection to their supplying the London and North Eastern Railway Company with water taken from the River Ouse. Under the terms of the agreement between the Board and the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, it is stipulated that water shall only be taken by the Company from the river, for use in connection with the factory, during the time when the factory is working beet.

The Committee recommended that the sugar factory be informed that the Board are not prepared to accede to their request. The recommendation was adopted.

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Collision in Fog.

Fatal Accident After Night Work.

Swavesey Lad's Death.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, November the 29th, 1929.

The story of how a motorcyclist with a pillion rider, crashed into the rear of a steam lorry shortly after 8 a.m., on November the 18th during a fog, was told at an inquest at Addenbrooke's Hospital on Saturday. The deceased was Arthur Kester, (21), of Swavesey, a checker-in at Ely Beet Sugar Factory, who was driving the motorcycle, and he died on Wednesday.

The inquest was held by the Borough Coroner, (Mr. G A Wootton), who sat with a jury, Mr. P W Fyson, being the foreman. A verdict of "Accidental death" was recorded.

"A Good Driver."

James Kester, a smallholder, Council Houses Swavesey, identified deceased as his son. His hearing, eyesight and general health were good, and he was a teetotaller. He had served about two years in the Royal Air Force, in the Mechanical Stores department, and while there, purchased a motorcycle.

He had had it about 18 months, and was a very good driver. Deceased commenced work at the Beet Sugar factory at Ely towards the end of September, and had to go to and fro on the motorcycle.

## “I Tried to Miss It.”

Witness saw him last Sunday evening at about 7 o'clock, when he was going to work, as he was on night duty. Next morning, at about 10:30, witness received information about the accident, and went to Addenbrooke's Hospital. His son was just conscious.

He saw him again the following day, when his son told him that he was riding on the near side, following the roadside, and all at once he saw a lorry. There was, he said, a thick bank of fog. “I tried to miss it, dad, but I could not do it,” he added. He also told witness that he left hold of his handlebars as quickly as he could, and tried to throw himself off the machine, but could not.

In reply to a juryman, witness said deceased did not mention whether there was a light on the back of the lorry.

## Pillion Riders Story.

Frank Richard Allen, (24), lodging at 46, Lynn Rd, Ely, a sample clerk at the Beet Sugar factory, said he was leaving the factory at about 8:00 am as he had been on night shift and was riding pillion with deceased. Kester was going to drop him at Ely and go on to Swavesey. The road was very slippery and frosty in places, and previous to the collision they had skidded as they passed out from the factory gate.

Although they had fallen off, neither were hurt. They went along the Prickwillow Road, and were going at about 20 miles per hour when the accident happened.

The Coroner: Rather fast in a fog, was it not?
Witness: The fog was not as thick all along.
How far could you see in front of you?
Fifty or sixty yards.
How far could you see just when the accident happened?
You could not see anything just then.
Do you think deceased was going too fast?
No.

Witness said they ran into a thick bank of fog and immediately saw a lorry just in front, and the next he knew was that he was on the road. He did not think he was unconscious. They did not see the lorry before, because of the fog and the steam from the lorry, and in his opinion that was the cause of the collision. He did not notice a light on the rear of the lorry.

## “Not Too Foggy”

Herbert Andrew Jocelyn, Lynn Rd, Ely, steam lorry steersman, said he, and the driver of the lorry, had been to the beet sugar factory with a load, and were returning empty.

The Coroner: Was it foggy at the time?
Witness: Not so foggy, as it was at the first part of the morning.
How far could you see in front of you?
I should say 100 yards with lights on.
Could you swear there was a light on the back?
When we left the factory.
This steam lorry, does it throw out much smoke?
At times it does.

Would that make much of a smoke screen?
No.

Witness added that they were travelling at about four and five miles per hour, and the smoke would go behind. They were on the near side of the road, about a foot from the pathway.

## A Slight Knock.

They felt a slight knock at the back of the wagon, continued witness, and they decided to stop. They went to the back of the lorry, but could not see anything.

They then saw a motor cycle, deceased and the pillion rider on the road. Deceased was on the path, and the pillion rider sitting on the edge of the path.

The impact caused the number plate of the lorry to be bent upwards. Witness agreed that the smoke from the lorry could be mistaken for fog at the back.

When the coroner asked witness if something could not be done to make the lorries consume their own smoke, witness did not reply. He could not suggest anything that would stop the smoke dropping down on the road and obscuring the lorry.

The coroner: You do say there was a considerable amount of black smoke at the back?
Witness: Yes, Sir.
And you do say that if that had not been, anyone could have seen 50 yards? —
Yes, Sir.
In reply to a question by a juryman, witness said he thought the impact put the rear lamp out. It was warm when they stopped.

P.C. Boulton, stationed at Ely, said that about 8:30 am, he received information about an accident and went to the spot.

He saw deceased on the path being attended to by Doctor Davis, and the pillion rider was sitting on the edge of the path with an injury to the forehead.

The motorcycle was on the near side, and had a smashed headlamp and bent number plate, front mudguard and forks.

The steam wagon was standing on the side of the road about 25 yards ahead. On the roadway There was a skid mark resembling a scratch, which was seven feet long.

He conveyed deceased to hospital in the Ely ambulance. If they were going 20 miles per hour in the fog, he would consider it rather fast.

## Cause of Death.

Doctor Isaacs, of Addenbrooke's Hospital, said deceased was admitted at about 10:35 am, and was semi-conscious. He had a broken neck and broken skull.

It was quite obvious that a considerable amount of force would have been needed to have caused the two injuries. Hyper pyrexia or abnormally high temperature was primarily the cause of death, followed by a broken neck.

“Accidental Death.”

THE LATE MR. ARTHUR KESTER.

The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental death,” and exonerated the driver of the wagon from blame. They expressed sympathy with the relatives, as also did the coroner.

An adjacent photograph of the late Mr. Arthur Kester.

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The Beet Sugar Factories Committee of Great Britain.

A List of all the Factories, and an Article Regarding Dried Beet Pulp.

The Essex Chronicle, Friday, January the 31st, 1930.

Dried Beet Pulp.

The below-mentioned factories, having supplied the requirements of their growers, have a limited surplus of dried beet pulp, (plain or molassed), for sale in Great Britain.

This valuable feeding stuff, a by-product of the beet sugar factories, has proved its value in this country, as abroad, for fattening stock, for increasing the yield of milk, and for improving the appearance of all stock.

Farmers are advised to have a few tons of pulp stored in reserve against wintry weather, or delayed growth of spring grass. The factories have agreed to offer their surplus production on the following terms for delivery, January, February, or March, provided that contracts are entered into before February the 28th, namely: --

£6 per ton, delivered to the consumer's railway station, for minimum lots of 4 or 5 tons, according to the minimum carriage rate.

Buyers taking delivery from the factory in their own vehicles for road transport will be allowed a cartage rebate of 10 shillings per ton.

Stock-breeders wishing to test for themselves the claims made for dried beet pulp as a stock feed, should apply to any of the above factories or to their authorised merchants.

Below is a copy of the list of factories, and the beet pulp article.

# The Beet Sugar . . Factories Committee OF GREAT BRITAIN.

The Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Colwick (Notts.) and Spalding (Lincs.). Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Felstead (Essex) and Poppleton (Yorks). British Sugar Manufacturers, Limited, Wissington (Norfolk). The Central Sugar Company, Limited, Peterborough (Northants). The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ely (Cambs.). The English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Cantley (Norfolk) and Kelham (Notts). The Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, Bardney (Lincs.). Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, Brigg (Lincs.). The Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ipswich (Suffolk). The King's Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, King's Lynn (Norfolk). Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited, Allscott (Salop). United Sugar Company, Limited, Bury St. Edmunds (Suffolk). The West Midland Sugar Company, Limited, Kidderminster (Worcs.). The Yorkshire Sugar Company, Limited, Selby (Yorks).

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Angling notes.

The Bedfordshire Times and Independent, Friday, February the 7th, 1930.

The result of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory prosecution was received with considerable rejoicing among local anglers. It will be remembered that effluent from the factory last autumn was responsible for very heavy fish mortality in the lower reaches of the river.

The Bedford Angling Club, anxious to help their less fortunate brethren, guaranteed the sum of £25 towards the cost of the case, which was adjourned until Wednesday last, and which resulted in the Sugar Factory being fined £50, with £120 costs.

A similar penalty was inflicted on another factory for the pollution of the River Witham. The promptness of our new Fishery Board in taking action, should be a source of encouragement to local anglers, and a warning to those individuals, who, for the past 10 or 15 years, have polluted the river.

Further, those malcontents, who have grumbled at having to pay the paltry sum of 1 shilling annually as a licence for the privilege of fishing the Ouse, may be silent now that they realise that their licence money is being used directly to safeguard, and benefit their fishing.

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Angling Notes.

By “Tommy Ruff.”

The Ely Prosecution.

The Lincolnshire Standard, Saturday, February the 15th, 1930.

Little can be said. In a way of criticism about the prosecution of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory for polluting the Ouse last October. The defending counsel said his clients were aggrieved by the magistrate’s decision, and entered notice of appeal in the ordinary course. This will not matter greatly if the magistrate's verdict is upheld and the factory have to pay the costs, but if there is a verdict for the company with costs against the board, then the latter will be faced with heavy liabilities, and it is only a newly formed body with little money at present.

Comparing the Bardney case with that at Ely, I feel compelled to say that the Lincolnshire factory behaved in a splendid manner, for by pleading guilty, a waste of money in costs was saved. Further, they are going to put in a costly plant before next season, which there is reason to believe will be a success, and that there will be no recurrence of this season's catastrophe.

Personally, I honestly think that the Bardney directors and officials will do their utmost to prevent the evil. The damage has been done to the Witham, but it will be something to know that we can commence restocking without fear of our labours being in vain. Anglers in general are not against the industry: all we desire is freedom from pollution. Surely this can be attained, and factories and fisheries flourish. At any rate, there is every reason to believe that we have finished with trouble on the Witham. Should the management at Bardney be successful, then they will be worthy of all praise.

Continental Methods.

In his evidence, the manager of the Ely factory made some interesting statements. He said that his experience as manager of various sugar beet factories covered a period of 27 years. He had been the manager of this company since 1925, when they started producing sugar.

As a Company, the Company had a capital of £450,000, and during the last campaign it dealt with as much as 2,400 tons of beet per day. Before he became manager of the Ely Company he had had experience as manager of other companies on the Continent, and, therefore, in his 27 years' experience, had had experience of different methods of producing sugar. He would say that 99 percent of the factories in the country and on the continent, had the same methods of effluent disposal.

In the years that had elapsed since 1927, the Company had spent in the purchase of beet alone, over two and a half million pounds, and for the last campaign over £160,000. The number of people employed was about 750 inside the factory, and about 200 outside. All those people came from the district. The amount of water used from the river for the factory for dealing with the beet was about four and a half million gallons per day, of which three and one third million gallons were passed through a settling tank into the river again.

After describing the method adopted by the factory in dealing with the effluent, Mr Willemstyn said he had certain improvements effected during 1929 for dealing with the effluent, ready for the 1929 to 1930 campaign. In his opinion, no satisfactory solution to the problem of dealing effectively with the effluent had yet been found.

Against Re-utilisation.

The Ely factory had spared neither time, trouble, nor money in their endeavours to arrive at a practical solution to the problem, and the statement by the prosecution that the factory had no intention of endeavouring to make any improvement in their methods, or that they had not tried to do so, was perfectly untrue.

He would not agree with re-utilisation of the water, because it would not, in his opinion, be economical for the factory. He would not, however, disagree with re-circulation of the water. If they adopted the method of re-utilisation, which gave them a lower sugar content, it would cost the factory a loss of £40,000 per campaign. Since they effected improvements early in 1929, the factory had been studying the possibility of further improvements, and still had the matter in hand.

Cross examined by Mr Winning, Mr Willemstyn said he could not say that he knew that the effluent, when it became mixed with river water, was injurious to fish. All he could tell them was, that from experiments carried out, they found that only one fish in five died.

The Ely manager stated definitely that reutilisation method would mean a big loss to the factory. Yet this is the method, I think, which the Bardney factory intend to use, hence my remarks that they intend to prevent pollution at all costs, if possible. The evidence of experts showed that fish in cages placed in the polluted water lived only a short time, and that the dissolved oxygen content of the river below the factory was such, that fish life was impossible.

What a director said.

I am surprised that the prosecution at Ely made no use of a statement made by Sir Frederick Hiam, one of the directors of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, at a meeting of the Ouse Drainage Board early in 1929. The Board were considering a suggested bye-law, "for preventing and remedying the fouling or contamination of water in water courses, vested in or under the control of the Board, and for compelling the owners or occupiers to cut the weeds in any such water courses."

Sir Frederick Hiam said he supposed the first part of the clause referred to the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. He could not understand why that Board should want to interfere with the

contamination of water at Ely. There was a factory at Ipswich: there, the water went into the river and not a word was said, because at Stowmarket, they had a silk factory, and this silk factory polluted the water. And so did every factory. Had there not been a beet sugar factory at Ely, there would have been a silk factory there, because inquiries were made as to the possibility of obtaining labour, etc.

Why did the Sheffield people come down to these parts to fish? It was because all their streams were contaminated. What was the value of a few fish? Indeed, it was not the value of the fish but what just a few men considered sport. Was this to stop a big industry? This country was going to the dogs now, and the more they had of this silly tomfoolery, the more it would go to the dogs. He would oppose the clause tooth and nail.

Thank Heaven, this is not the attitude of the Bardney directors.

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Ouse Drainage Board.

The Clerkship.

Raising the Salary.

[From Our Own Reporter.]

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, February the 28th, 1930.

Cambridge, Thursday.

After interviewing three candidates for the position of Clerk, the Ouse Drainage Board decided not to proceed with the appointment today, but to advertise the post again, at a salary of £900, which is £200 more than the salary previously offered. Tribute to the “extremely valuable services” that had been rendered to the Board by the present clerk, Mr. A Bebbington, was paid by the Chairman, Mr. Max Townley.
Mr. Arthur Holden, builder and contractor, of Thetford, and Mr. Walter Cornell Fison, of Thetford, were appointed representatives on the Board for Electoral District number 7, sub-areas, D2; D3; and D4.

The South Level Works account showed that there had up to date been a total expenditure on the scheme of £85,877; towards this, grants from the Ministry had been received amounting to £41,791, and from the rates £28,014, leaving a balance uncollected of £10,984. The committee also reported that since January the 7th, 1930, the sum of £7,207 had been received on account of rates. -- Mr. H.J. Martin, said it was satisfactory to know that the rates were coming in better.

The board's debit balance at the bank was reported to be £56,795, namely, general account £46,098; South Level account £10,697.

Having considered the question of appointing an engineer to supervise the various unemployment schemes now being undertaken in various parts of the boards district, the Finance and General Purposes Committee, recommended that, provided the local authorities concerned were prepared to guarantee the expense of the engineer in the event of the schemes not being preceded with, such an appointment be made, --This was agreed to.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee reported, that the action brought by Mr. Gilbert Morse, of North court, Brandon, for a perpetual injunction, to restrain the board for levying distress on goods outside their area, was dismissed with costs on the 10th instant. The interim injunction, which Mr. Morse previously obtained, was discharged. –The Chairman said there was a great deal of misapprehension on the part of the rate-payers, as to the trouble and expense to which they put the board, by enforcing litigation on it. Therefore, it was all the more satisfactory that the board had proved, under the able guidance of their clerk, that they were right in this matter, and that this case had been decided in their favour.

The Finance Committee reported that they had given careful consideration to the question of the discharge of effluents into the Roswell pits from the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, under the agreement with the company, dated November the 24th, 1924, and recommended that a subcommittee, consisting of the Chairman, Messrs. H.J. Martin, T.W.H. Clarke, and A. Darby, be appointed to enter into negotiations with the Factory Company, with a view to a more satisfactory arrangement being entered into.

In answer to Mr. M. Stocks, the Chairman said a rather extraordinary statement had been made, and this appeared in the Press, that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory were, for a payment of 10 shillings, receiving accommodation worth £3,000. This was an extraordinary statement. The arrangement with the factory was made after full consideration by the committee which reported to the board.

Mr. A Derby, said it was also stated at the previous meeting of the board, that the Sugar Beet Factory, for the poultry sum of ten shillings, took water which other authorities were paying something like £90 for, but it was proved to the committee, that the factory was the riparian owners, and had a right to take the water from the river under certain conditions, –that they must put it back again. It was very misleading for a member of the board to state that they, as a board, had allowed the Ely Sugar Beet Factory, to take water and discharge their effluent for a sum of ten shillings, whereas the value was something like £3000.

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Farmers Union Notes.

Ouse Drainage Board.

The Bedfordshire Times and Independent, Friday, March the 7th, 1930.

At a meeting of the Ouse Drainage Board on Thursday week, considerable time was spent in discussing the appointment of a new clerk to succeed Mr. A. Bebbings, and although three candidates were interviewed, it was decided not to make an appointment at that time. A minute stated that the amount received on account of rates between the 7th of January and the 13th of February was £7,209. The Finance and General Purposes Committee also reported that they had given careful consideration to the question of the discharge of effluents into the Roswell Pits from the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, under the agreement with the company dated 24th of November 1924, and recommended that a sub-committee be appointed to enter into negotiations with the company with a view to a more satisfactory arrangement being entered into. The chairman said the matter arose from a misleading statement at the last meeting, that the factory were receiving £3,000 worth of service, for 10 shillings. The recommendation was agreed to.

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Ouse Drainage Board.

Beet-Sugar Effluent Problems Under Discussion.

Barge “Obstruction” at Lynn.

The Lynn and County Press, Tuesday, June the 3rd, 1930.

The Ouse Drainage Board, at its meeting at Cambridge on Thursday, approved the terms of a new agreement with the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. During the discussion, it transpired that the effluent is to be conveyed in a pipeline under the river to a new storage pond on the other side; the outlet to the Roswell pits, (hitherto used for taking the effluent), is to be closed permanently, but the company is to be allowed to deposit solid matter in the pits, to a level height of 14 feet above ordnance datum. It is anticipated that this will be done during the next twelve months.

There was some discussion as to the nature of the solid matter to be deposited in the pits.

Mr. T.W.H. Clarke said that if wet pulp, or the tops and ends of the beet were put in the pits, it would become a fermenting, stinking mass, and a great nuisance to the residents of Ely. He spoke of an occasion when, after searching for two hours in his house for what he thought was an escape of gas, he went outside to discover it was a smell coming from the beet factory two miles away!

75,000 Tons of Earth.

Sir Frederick Hiam, speaking on behalf of the factory, said he could promise that no wet pulp would go into the pits. All the liquid matter would be conducted under the river to the new settling-ponds. The deposits into Roswell Pits would be thick matter, conveyed there by high pressure in pipes. It would dry very quickly. They thought the pits would be filled before the season was over.

When Mr. S. Preston objected to the factory being allowed to put “sludge” into the pits, the Chairman, (Mr Max Townley), said, at the present moment, the factory had the right to discharge the effluent into the pits, and the board was seeking, with the assistance of the factory, the best way of getting over the difficulties that had arisen.

Sir Frederick Hiam said they had 75,000 tons of solid earth washed off the beet, to deal with every year. It was reported that a draft Order, relative to the recovery of drainage rates by the board, had been received from the Ministry of Agriculture, and that a number of objections, including one from the West Suffolk County Council, had been received. The board decided to take no action in regard to these objections.

An Obstruction.

Mr Preston inquired the grounds of the West Suffolk objection, and the Chairman said it was because the board at present collected rates on the area-basis instead of annual values, which had nothing whatever to do with the case.

The board's debit balance at the bank was stated to amount to £59,414. In the past month, £3,355 had been received on account of rates.

The Engineer reported that the remains of a sunken barge in the River Ouse at Lynn was an obstruction. On the recommendation of the Works committee, it was decided to call upon the Lynn Conservancy Board to arrange for the barge to be removed.

The question of what regulations, if any, should be made for the control of Welmore Lake Sluice, was adjourned until the new sluice is completed.

This being the last meeting of the board which the clerk, (Mr. A. Bebbington), would attend, the Chairman moved: “That this board, place on record, appreciation of the services rendered to it by Mr. A. Bebbington, and whilst regretting him leaving, wish him every success with the Doncaster Drainage Board”. Mr. H.J. Martin seconded, and the resolution was passed unanimously.

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Ouse Board.

Revised Agreement with Ely Factory.

The Upper Ouse.

Arrangement with Saint Ives Corporation.

(Relevant parts of News Item only)

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, June the 6th, 1930.

A revised agreement with the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, with regard to the use of Roswell Pits, and an arrangement with the Saint Ives Corporation in regard to Saint Ives Staunch and premises, were the principal matters dealt with by the Ouse Drainage Board at their meeting at the County Hall, Cambridge.

Mr. Max Townley presided, and there were also present: Messrs. W. Hutson, (vice chairman), O Ambrose, T.W.H. Clarke, H J Darby, E O Fordham, W C Fison, A D Godfrey, and J N Heathcoat, Sir F. Hiam, Messrs. J L Luddington, H J Martin, S Preston, S Parsons, S Smith, R Taylor, and C G Tebbutt.

Agreement With the Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Works Committee reported that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, had applied for a lease from the Board of certain portions of the river banks, and for permission to run a pipe line through the bed of the river from the factory, to a proposed storage pond.

A special meeting between the committee and the representatives of the factory had been held, and the committee were of the opinion that it was desirable to substitute a new agreement, for the existing agreement with the Company, dated the 24th of November, 1924.

After full discussion, with the Company's representatives, however, the committee recommended that the clause in the present agreement with regard to discharge from the factory into the Roswell Pits be superseded. In its place they recommended that a supplemental agreement be entered into embodying, among others, clauses to the following effect:

That the outlet from the Roswell Pits into the river be closed permanently, but that the Company be allowed to deposit solid matter in the Pits to a level of 14 feet above Ordnance Datum within a certain time.

That use of part of the river banks in connection with the proposed storage pond be granted to the Company for 21 years on an annual payment of £50.

That permission be granted to the Company to lay a pipe line in the bed of and through the bank of the river from the factory to the proposed storage pond, provided an annual payment of £5 be made by the Company to the Board, and that in the event of breach of any of the conditions, the agreement be terminated on six months' notice in writing.

Thought there was a Gas Leak!

In the discussion which ensued, Mr. Clarke said the Board ought not to allow anything to be deposited that would cause a nuisance to the City of Ely. He had known the time when he had looked to see if there was a leakage of gas, –owing to the awful smell from stuff from the factory.

The Chairman, replying to Mr. Preston, said he understood that the deposit from the factory would consist of mud washed off the sugar beet. He expected it would be of the consistency of about 50-50.

Mr Darby said the mud would contain a certain amount of water, and there should be something to prevent this discharging into the river.

The Chairman said the agreement provided for the deposit of "solid matter" only. There was nothing allowing them to deposit liquid matter.

Sir, F. Hiam said they could not pass dry matter through the pipe. It would be a kind of slush which would dry quickly. There was some 750,000 tons of solid matter which was washed off the beet in one year. They could not move it without water.

"A Fermenting, Stinking Mass."

Mr. Clarke said, that if the slush contained "tops and bottoms" off the beet, it would make a fermenting, stinking mass. After further discussion, the recommendations were adopted.

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£25,000 Ely scheme.

Factory tackling river pollution.

Fishery Board deputation.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, June the 20th, 1930.

It was reported at the quarterly meeting of the Ouse and Cam Fishery Board, held at the Boards Offices, 22, Saint Andrews St, Cambridge, yesterday, that the Ely Beet Sugar factory were spending a sum of approximately £25,000 in installing plant, etc., to deal effectively with its effluent.

The Chairman of the Board, (Doctor Charles Searle) presided, and those present included: Messrs. P W Gray, (Cambs County Council), J H Swanton, (Essex County Council), J H Cartright, (Cambridge Albion Angling Society), M J S Riss, (Bedfordshire Ouse Preservation Society), J O Manton, (Buckingham and District Angling Association), G F Thackray, (Huntingdon Angling Society), G A Hayes, (Kings Lynn Angling Association), W B Hunt, (Littleport Angling Association), Doctor E W Goodall, (Saint Ives Angling Society), Lieutenant Colonel, E P S Roupell, (honorary special water bailiff), and the Clerk, (Mr. G H Lewis)

The Chairman, after welcoming the new members of the Board, referred to the valuable services rendered during the past two years by Mr. F Hudson, (St. Ives), and regretted that those services were no longer available to the Board. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Hudson, coupled with the hope that his interest in the Board's affairs would not cease with his resignation.

## Re-Stocking.

The Clerk's report stated, that with the kind permission of the owners, private lakes at Hatton Hall, (near Brentwood), Madingley, (Cambridge) and Godmanchester, had been netted, and approximately 6,000 carp, roach and rudd transferred to other waters in the fishery district.

The question of restocking the waters, which were practically denuded of fish during the last beet sugar campaign was considered, and it was agreed to take this matter in hand when it was safe to assume that further pollution from this source would not occur.

## Local Authorities and Pollution.

Copies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries report on the pollution of the river Great Ouse had been circulated to local authorities within the district, and the letter had been sent from the Board inviting observations thereon.
From the replies received, and from reports appearing in the press, it was clear that in most cases the report had received careful consideration.
The most encouraging result from the issue of the report, was the general admission that rivers pollution was as much the concern of local authorities, as of fishery boards, and a willingness on the part of the authorities to cooperate with the Board in this matter.

## Deputation to Ely Factory.

The Chairman reported that a deputation had visited the Ely Beet Sugar Factory that morning, and the General Manager, Mr. H. Willemstyn, had very kindly given details of measures being adopted for dealing with the factory effluent in future.

It was proposed to treat the wash water chemically, and use this over and over again. This accounted for about 80 percent of the total. Land had been acquired on the opposite side of the river, to which the press water would be pumped and stored during the campaign, being returned to the river having been purified, after the campaign.

Special plant for dealing with the diffusion water had also been installed, and it was estimated that the factory was spending about £25,000 on this new system, which it was claimed would entirely obviate future pollution of the river.

Mr. Willemstyn's suggestion that cages of fish should be kept in the river in the vicinity of the factory to test the effectiveness of the new system, was readily agreed by the Board.

## "Eels".

A letter was read from the Cambridge Albion Angling Society, suggesting an amendment in the bye-law on the Board, which permits the use of rod and line during the close season for fishing for eels.

Several members of the Board agreed that this privilege was being unfairly used, and that a good many persons were using it as a pretext for catching other fish.

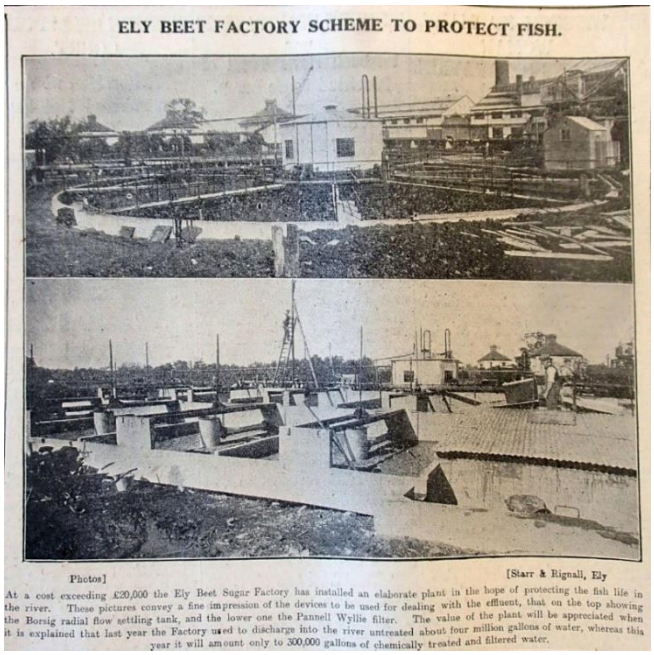
After some discussion, it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. G F Thackray, seconded by Mr. J S Biss, that application be made to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for approval to a bye-law, prohibiting angling for eels during the close season.

Licence Evasion and Water Bailiffs.

It was agreed that the Board make contributions to Angling Societies towards the cost of maintaining bailiffs to police the waters of the district for the purpose of preventing licence evasion, and other offences.
It was also resolved that Mr. W Rolls, be appointed a paid part-time water bailiff under the Clerk.

Photographs and caption below showing the new filtration system. Caption reads:

At a cost exceeding £20,000, the Ely Beet Sugar Factory has installed an elaborate plant in the hope of protecting the fish life in the river.
These pictures convey a fine impression of the devices to be used for dealing with the effluent, that on the top showing the Borsig radial flow settling tank, and the lower one the Pannell Wyllie filter.


ELY BEET FACTORY SCHEME TO PROTECT FISH.

Photos] [Starr & Rignall, Ely

At a cost exceeding £20,000 the Ely Beet Sugar Factory has installed an elaborate plant in the hope of protecting the fish life in the river. These pictures convey a fine impression of the devices to be used for dealing with the effluent, that on the top showing the Borsig radial flow settling tank, and the lower one the Pannell Wyllie filter. The value of the plant will be appreciated when it is explained that last year the Factory used to discharge into the river untreated about four million gallons of water, whereas this year it will amount only to 300,000 gallons of chemically treated and filtered water.

The value of the plant will be appreciated when it is explained that last year the factory used to discharge into the river untreated about 4,000,000 gallons of water, whereas this year it will amount to only 300,000 gallons of chemically treated and filtered water.

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Eels and Pollution.

The Lincolnshire Standard and Boston Guardian, Wednesday, October the 15th, 1930.

Two interesting items appear in the report of the quarterly meeting of the Ouse and Cam Fishery Board. The first is with reference to eels, and it was resolved that, in order to put a stop to the illegal catching of freshwater fish on the pretence of fishing for eels, the existing bye-law which permits angling for eels during the annual close season with rod and line be revoked, and, further, that the Ministry be asked to confirm a proposed bye-law prohibiting the fishing for eels with any instrument, other than a rod and line during the open coarse fishing season, except with permission of the Board.

The report of the Executive Committee on Pollutions within the district was received and adopted, after some discussion on the subject of sugar beet effluents. As the factories in the area had now commenced their 1930-31 campaigns, and in view of the trouble experienced during the past years, it was natural that the opening of the present campaign should cause some concern.

The Committee was pleased to be able to state that up to the present, conditions were satisfactory, and the report of a special visit to the Ely factory, prior to the meeting, was received with much satisfaction.

This report contained details of the plant specially installed to deal with the effluent, and went on to say that there was every reason to believe that if the plant functioned properly, there should be no further cause for complaint against this factory.

It was decided that the Committee should follow the progress of the campaign and report at an early date the position at each of the beet sugar factories in the district.

Also, on the same page.

Fell into Boiling Sugar.

Thomas Arthur Pickworth, age 20, of 27, Belmont Street, Lincoln, who lies in the County Hospital as a result of falling into a vat of boiling sugar at Bardney Beet Sugar Factory on Friday, is slowly recovering.

Although he was in the mixture up to the neck, he was saved by the fact that the syrup did not soak quickly through his clothes, and he escaped with burns on the left arm, shoulder and ankles.

Pickworth slipped into a sugar mixer containing some tons of boiling sugar. His screams were heard by another workman, Mr. J Kirton, senior, of 4, Eagle Street, Lincoln, who dashed to the spot, pulled Pickworth up to a girder, and supported him till help arrived.

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Killed on the line.

Adelaide Crossing Fatality.

“Risking It”

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 24th, 1930.

How a man, watching a down train coming from Ely, on the level crossing at the Peterborough gates at Adelaide, was instantly killed by an up express train from March on Tuesday, was unfolded at an inquest on Wednesday.

Deceased was George Bentley Fuller, aged 29, an employee at the Ely beet sugar factory, living at number 2, New Barns Road, Ely.

The inquiry took place at the Ely Shire Hall, before Mr George Martin Hall, the City Coroner.

Sergeant Detective Conder represented the London and North Eastern Railway, and Superintendent P J Newell, was present for the Ely Police.

The first witness was Harry East, who said he was a general labourer, and resided at 19, Lynn Rd, Ely. He identified the body, as that of George Bentley Fuller.

The coroner: Had he good hearing? --Yes, Sir.

Was his sight good? --Yes, and he was a sober man. Deceased's age was 29 years.

Walter William Everett Cross, gave evidence that he lived at 27, Chiefs St, Ely, and was a general labourer. He knew the deceased well, and worked in the same factory, --the Ely Sugar Beet Factory.

Did you leave the factory together? --Yes, Sir, on Tuesday, about one minute past two.

Were you both on push bicycles? --Yes Sir.

Did you arrive at the gates at the same time? --Yes Sir, the Peterborough line.

"I don't think we shall do it".

Were the gates open or closed? --Closed.

I suppose you know when the gates are closed that a train is expected? --There is a wicket gate.

Did you see a train coming? --Yes, one from the Ely direction, about half a mile away.

What did you say to the deceased? --I said I don't think we shall do it. I meant that we should not get across the line in time.

Witness, continuing, stated that he said to the deceased, that he would stop that side of the gate closed, nearest to the Factory. Deceased said, "I think I shall go."

The coroner: That meant he was going to risk it? --Yes Sir.

Did you see another train coming? --No, I had got my attention on the train coming, and I did not look the other way.

"Rattle of cycle wheel"

Further questioned, witness said the train that struck the deceased came from March. All he heard was a rattle of the deceased bicycle wheel.

The men from the Hut close by, came out and asked what was the matter. Another man on a lorry told the railwaymen that a body was lying on the footway. Witness had no doubt that the deceased was struck and killed by the engine.

Terrible injuries.

Doctor K S Maurice Smith, of Ely, stated he was called about 2:20 p.m. on the Tuesday, and found the man dead near the crossing at the Peterborough gates. The body was lying on the four-foot way on the up line. Witness gave details of terrible injuries to the head, arms and legs. Death was instantaneous.

The coroner said that when the gates were closed against the public, they had no right to go across, whether there was a hand gate or not. That was the sign that the Railway Company gave that there was danger, so if a man wanted to go through when they were closed, he must not blame the Railway Company. He thought the Railway Company were not at fault, or he would not hesitate to say so. In these days of fast-moving vehicles, they must look to the left and right and all round. If that man had been wise, and acted as his friend had done, he would have been alive today.

The only verdict he could return was that there was no fault whatever on the part of the Railway Company, and death was caused through misadventure.

The coroner expressed his sympathy with the wife and relatives of the deceased in their sudden bereavement, and Detective Sergeant Conder associated himself with the coroner's remarks.

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Tragedy of Impatience.

Ely Labourer Killed by Express. Caution Saves Companion.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, October, the 24th, 1930.

With his attention riveted to a train approaching in the distance at Ely on Tuesday, George Bentley Fuller, aged 29, an employee of the Ely Beet Sugar factory, was killed by an express which approached from behind him. Fuller, whose home was at 2, New Barns Road, Ely, had been standing on the level crossing at the Peterborough gates at Adelaide, and the train which struck him had left Peterborough and was bound for Ely.

The tragedy was the subject of an inquiry held on Wednesday at the Shire Hall, Ely, by Mr George Martin, the city Coroner. Harry East, of 19, Lynn Road, Ely, a general labourer, identified the body and said that Fuller had good hearing and sight, and, to the best of his knowledge, was a sober man.

Walter William Everett Cross, of 27, Chiefs St, Ely, also a general labourer, said he worked with Fuller at the Ely beet sugar factory.

They left the factory together on Tuesday shortly after two o'clock, and both arrived at the Peterborough Railway gates at the same time, only to find that they were closed.

A train was approaching from the direction of Ely; it was against the junction about half a mile away. Witness said to Fuller, "I don't think we shall do it," meaning they could not get across and added, "I shall stop this side." Fuller said, "I think I shall," meaning he was going to cross.

Witness did not see or hear the other train coming, as their attention was on the one coming from Ely. The train from March, however, hit Fuller.

The gate man from the hut next, came out and asked what was the matter, and a man with a beet-lorry said, "Look at that man lying there." Witness had no doubt that Fuller was killed by the engine.

Doctor K S Maurice Smith, said he found the body lying in the four-foot way and the man was dead. The top of his skull was completely smashed, and there were two large scalp wounds on the right-hand side.

The brains were missing and there was a wound round the left eye. Some of the bones of the face were fractured, the neck and collarbone broken; and the right forearm, haunch-bone, and thigh were broken also.

The left thigh and leg were broken in several places and the left foot was missing from just above the ankle. Death, which was instantaneous, was due to haemorrhage and shock due to multiple injuries.

In his summing-up, the coroner said there was no question of doubt about the case. It was like everything else in this age: It was done with a rush; people wanted to do things much more quickly than they did 50 years ago.

The poor man had not patience to wait until the train had gone by. He, (the coroner), would tell them that when the gates were closed against the public, they had no right to go across, whether there was a hand gate or not.

That was the sign that the railway company gave, indicating that there was danger. If a man wanted to go through when they were closed, therefore, he must not blame the railway company.

To look only one way, when they did see a train coming half a mile away, and did not look the other way, what would they think of anyone who did not use a little precaution? It could be called nothing more than foolhardiness.

But the poor man had gone. He knew nothing about it; that was one consolation.

He, (the coroner), thought the railway company were not at fault, or he would not hesitate to say so. In these days of fast-moving vehicles, they must look to the left and right and all round.

If that man had been wise, and acted as his friend had done, he would have been alive today. He found the only single verdict he could find: there was no fault whatever on the part of the railway company, and death was caused through misadventure.

The coroner said he wished to express his sympathy to the wife and relatives of the deceased in their sudden bereavement. Detective Sergeant Conder, who represented the London and North Eastern Railway, also associate himself with the coroner's remarks.

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Largest Tank of its Kind in Europe.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, November the 7th, 1930.

Photograph and caption below.

Caption reads: An innovation of one sort or another is usually introduced for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

This year has seen erected the largest tank of its kind in Europe for holding liquid's. It will be used for storing molasses, one of the by-products of the factories manufacture.

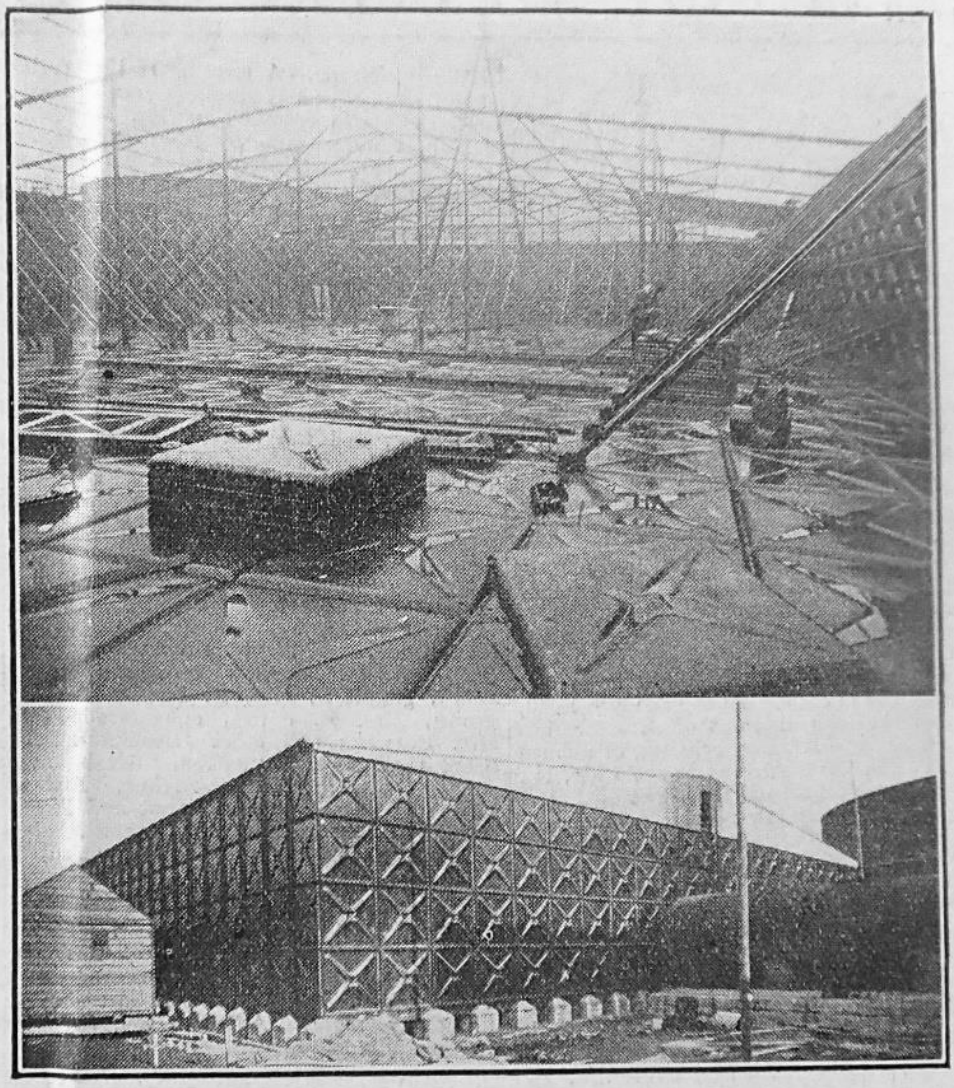
Having a length of 136 feet, of breadth of 92 feet, and a height of 60 feet, the capacity in gallons of the tank is 1,760,000, and it is erected under contract in the remarkably short space of seven weeks.

The enormous concrete foundations were laid by Messrs Walker, Western and Company of London, the walls of the tank by Messrs Braithwaite and Company of London, and the roof, with steel supports inside by Messrs Thorne of Norwich.

The picture shown above, conveys an excellent impression of the immensity of this tank, the speedy erection of which is believed to be a record for work of this description.

Cambridgeshire Times NOVEMBER 7, 1930.

# LARGEST TANK OF ITS KIND IN EUROPE.



An inovation of one sort or another is usu ally introduced for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. This year has seen erected the largest tank of its kind in Europe for holding liquids. It will be used for storing molasses, one of the big products of the Factory's manufacture. Having a length of 136 feet, a breadth of 92 feet and a height of 60, the capacity in gallo ns of the tank is 1,760,000, and it is erected under contract in the remarkably short space of seven weeks. The enormous concrete foundations were laid by Messrs. Walker, We ston and Co., of London, the walls of the tank by Messrs. Braithwaite and Co., of Lon don, and the roof, with steel supports inside, by Messrs. Thorne, or Norwich. The pictur es shown above convey an excellent impression of the immensity of this tank, the speedy erection of which is believed to be a record for work of this description.

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Word of Advice to the Farmers.

The Newquay Express, Thursday, November 20th, 1930.

(Part of an article with regard to Farming).

The President for the year, was Mr. A. Browning Lyne.

The Sugar Beet Industry.

He, (the President), suggested that in seeking for remedies, they need to go very slow for fear that they might put themselves in a worse plight than now. He asked if the farmer could not do something for himself.

He feared that the farmer was not so readily adaptable to new things as he might be. There was a natural conservatism in the British farmer. He recently attended a gathering of the sugar beet industry at Ely. They could take it, that a very great deal of money was made by the sugar beet growers, and the manufacturers. It might be that the latter got more than the former, but even if there had been an unequal distribution of the profits, there had been a very substantial profit by the farmer and those with him.

Cornish farmers had agreed, that beet was the best paying crop on their farms. When they blamed governments and party politics, they should remember that it was the Government subsidy that made sugar beet growing profitable. He believed that it could be done without a subsidy. --("No."). To those who said "No", he would reply that those who had established factories at Ely said it could be done without, and they would not be a penny the worse. If more beet was grown in Cornwall, they might attract a factory in the county.

There were other things that should receive their attention. Why should they import so much of their food from other countries? In 1928, they imported £187,000,000 worth of food. From Denmark, £18,000,000 worth of butter, £4,000,000 worth of eggs and £25,000,000 worth of bacon.

Why should not the British farmers produce some, if not all, of that for human consumption at home? He suggested that they were slow in adapting themselves to circumstances because their fathers before them were not accustomed to do a certain thing.

Recently a director of Lloyds Bank, referring to the situation, declared that it was all a matter of international currency, and if that was so, they would have to tackle it together.

It was all very well to talk of the British Empire as one great Commonwealth, but he suggested that the solution would come with less isolation, and more economic unity. They should deal with matters on an international basis, and not so much on a national basis.

In Cornwall, after all, with their mixed farms, they were suffering less than in other parts of the country, although some of them were doing better out of sugar beet than in the times of corn growing.

He mentioned that in the Eastern Counties, he was told that their labour bill had increased to £2,000 a year more than in pre-war days.

And it paid the farmers. He asked if it was not possible that while some of them were looking for extraneous aid, some of which in certain circumstances might be desirable, they could not do little more for themselves? (Applause).

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Farmers and Sugar Beet.

A Development in British Agriculture.

Visit to One of the Sugar Factories.

Some Intimate Facts for the West Country Farmer.

(By A. Browning Lyne).

The Newquay Express, Thursday, November the 27th, 1930.

Though the sugar beet industry in this country is so comparatively young, it has made remarkable growth, and those concerned with the position of agriculture are giving no little thought to what is likely to happen in the near future, so far as the growing of sugar beet is concerned. We don't know so much about this development in agriculture down this way, as they do in some other parts of the country, particularly in the eastern counties. There are, however, a number of farmers in Devon and Cornwall who have been growing sugar beet during the last three or four years and have been quite satisfied with the results. In fact, if you get into fairly intimate conversation with them, they will not mind admitting that the growing of beet is the best paying proposition on their farms at the present time. Of course, it has to be borne in mind that the production of beet just for the present, is an artificially supported development in farming. That is to say, the Government has been granting a subsidy for its growth, –a subsidy which is on a sliding scale, and which may now be possibly placing the industry in a position likely to create a certain amount of uncertainty and instability. This, of course, is much to be regretted, but it is the inevitable consequence of any artificial stimulus applied to any particular industry.

Still, I am not so much concerned for the moment to deal with the economics of the position, as to tell my readers something of what is actually going on. I was privileged a fortnight ago to accompany a number of West Country farmers who had been invited to inspect operations at one of the best equipped and best managed of the sugar-beet factories in the country. These farmers are all growers of beet in the West, and as I journeyed in the train with them, I could have no misgivings as to the satisfaction which they had derived from launching out into this new branch of British farming; and if that is the happy position with West Country farmers who have been growing beet, how much more is it so with those, say, in the Eastern counties, who are relatively so close to the factories, and who, therefore, have not to pay anything like so much to get their produce conveyed to the place where it is to be turned into sugar?

There is no doubt at all, that somebody has been making a great deal of money out of sugar beet since the industry was started in this country. The arguable point may be as to how far this money has been made as a result of the subsidy, and how far it has been made independently of any artificial stimulus of that kind. From my own observations, and as a listener to the conversations going on, I am inclined to think that the growing of sugar beet may still be a profitable occupation in this country, even with little or no help from the State. Admittedly, the ratio of prosperity may be less if there is no State support, but I still believe it would be substantial enough to make the growing of beet yet worthwhile.

When you remember that even today, we are only making enough sugar in this country to last six weeks in the year, and are importing all the rest from other lands, it can be seen that there is plenty of room yet to make more for ourselves, if we can do so on healthy economic basis. Of course, the growing of beet involves rather more labour on a farm than some other branches of farming. Possibly, it is not a kind of labour that the workmen care about so much as about some other branches. But you can generally get an honest British working man to

do work which he less likes, if he gets compensated in the rate of pay. I am never tired of saying to my farmer friends, because I think many of them are rather slow to appreciate it, that it is always a paying proposition, to pay an extra shilling in any direction, whether it be for labour or material or for machinery, if that extra payment is going to bring back an additional one shilling and six pence. Those who have been enterprising enough down this way to start growing sugar-beet have had to change some of their methods, have had to educate themselves a little bit along different lines, and have had to accommodate their labour to the new conditions. This has all meant a little disturbance from the old routine, but it is a good thing sometimes to get out of the old routine and, get into a new.

## Visit to a Factory.

My visit to the Ely factory, in Cambridgeshire, was certainly a revelation. This is one of the finest factories of its kind in the country, and being completely post war, it is in every respect modern, and being worked under the best possible conditions. Beet factories are only working for somewhere about four months in the year, but during those four months they are working full time all the week through. That is to say, it is a 24-hour day, every day of the week. During the other period of the year a good deal of time is put in to take apart a lot of the machinery and clean it, and get it ready for the following season. It means, of course, that there are a large number of hands employed when the sugar is actually being manufactured, but a smaller number when the season is over. It is a happy circumstance, however, that many of those engaged in the factory in this making of sugar are, at other periods of the year, engaged on the land nearby in actually producing the beet which they will deal with later in the factory. There is no doubt that behind this industry there are some of the best business brains in the country. I was much struck by the ability shown by the heads of the different departments at Ely. There are no gush and rush, but a quiet confidence, suggesting that they all know what they are about, and why they are about it.

Mr. A T Aitken, who is perhaps the flywheel of the circle of factories, of which Ely is one, gave us some instructive and illuminating facts in the course of his remarks at the luncheon given to us after our tour of inspection. His group, he said, consisted of fourteen companies, and they were running eighteen factories. In 1922, there were only 3,760 tons of sugar produced in this country. Last year, the total production was 289,489 tons. England, he said, was capable of growing as fine a beet for the production of sugar as any country in the world. One can believe all that was told us about the growth of this industry after what we saw at the factory at Ely. There must have been lorries and horse-drawn vehicles, all loaded with sugar beet, lined up for more than half a mile along the road leading to the factory, waiting their turn to go in to unload and be checked. That was about the only unsatisfactory feature of anything that we saw at the factory. It did seem as if a lot of standing time was necessary in order to clear those waiting loaded lorries. It seemed as if they needed to be standing about for several hours before their turn would come. I suppose it is inevitable just at the rush period. In addition to these loads on the road, there were barges being unloaded from the river which flows right alongside.

It seemed to be beet everywhere, –beet in the fields as we came along to Ely, beet on the roads, and certainly beet everywhere in the factory. I have been through a good many factories associated with all sorts of industry in this country and others, but I was never more pleased in any of them with what I saw, than I was with the one at Ely. Everything seemed to be working so smoothly, and at each stage, something very definite was being accomplished, with the final result of some of the best sugar in the world finding Its way eventually into the huge store, packed and ready to pass on to the market.

## Producers Interests Watched.

One very interesting feature in connection with all this, is the manner in which the interests of the producer are watched at the factory. Each consignment is most carefully checked and isolated, while the sugar content of a sample of the beet is carefully obtained.

It is on this sample test of the sugar content that the producer is paid for, the bulk of which he sends forward. Some beet, of course, is very much richer in sugar content than others, and that which is richest, of course, pays the producer the best.

It was very interesting to be told that the National Farmers Union have certain representatives on the spot at all the time while the checking and testing is going on, and for this service on the part of the Union, farmers have to make a contribution by certain small deductions from the payment which they get for their beet.

On arrival at the factory, the beets are unloaded into the silos and are conveyed by water through beet flumes to the mammoth pump, which elevates them into the beet washer. They are then elevated to the automatic weigher, and thence fall into the cutting mills. The shredded beet, (called cossettes), is now conveyed to the steffen presses, where a certain amount of juice is extracted.

On leaving the steffen, the cossettes are conveyed to the diffusion batteries, where the rest of the sugar in solution is extracted. The exhausted cossettes, (called wet pulp), are discharged into a trough below the diffusion batteries, and flow to the pump elevator, and then conveyed to the pulp presses, thence to pulp driers. The dried pulp is blown through a large pipe into the pulp store where it is bagged.

The juice, (called raw juice), which has been extracted from the cossettes in course of their process through the steffen presses and diffusion batteries, is measured in the measuring tanks. The raw juice now goes to the lime mixers, where quicklime is mixed with it for purification purposes.

The limed juice passes into the carbonation tanks, where carbonic acid gas is pumped through it, causing the greater proportion of the impurities to form insoluble compounds. The carbonated juice is forced through filter presses, thus removing the compounds; it is then reheated and again carbonated and filtered so as to remove all the lime. The juice, now called thin juice, passes through bag filters and then to the sulphitation tanks, –this process is also for the removal of the impurities. The thin juice now goes into the evaporators where the water is evaporated off, thus making the thin juice into thick juice. The thick juice passes into vacuum or boiling pans where it is boiled down to a massecuite, (i.e. crystallisation).

The massecuite then falls into crystallisers, where the sugar crystallisation process is continued. The sugar is separated out of the massecuite in the centrifugal’s, and thence conveyed to the granulator, passes on to the sugar bins, thence to the bagging machine and into the sugar store ready for despatch.

At the luncheon to which I referred earlier, we were privileged to have in the chair, Sir Frederick Hiam, who is one of the largest growers of beet in this country, and who is himself a director of the Ely factory. I don't know how many thousand acres Sir Frederick himself farms. Perhaps he hardly knows himself, but it certainly runs into some thousands.

He told us, for instance, that he puts 2,000 acres into potatoes, 500 acres into celery, and somewhere just under 2,000 acres into beet. The acreage for beet yielded him last year, 18,558 tons, giving an average of about eleven tons to the acre. That will open the eyes of

some of our small mixed farmers down this way, when they begin to think of labour costs. But it must be borne in mind that Sir Frederick has got a lot of his land for little or nothing, relatively at any rate with what is paid for best lands in other parts of the country. The Eastern counties are particularly adapted for growing of beet, and there is no doubt at all, that beet has been the salvation of many of the farmers in those parts, who have found the growing of corn so unprofitable.

Some Facts and Figures.

To give some idea of labour costs in the case of Sir Frederick Hiam, he told us that he has to pay £30,000 a year more for his labour than he did pre-war. He did not tell us whether that figure was based on the same amount of labour pre-war and post-war, but I should say probably not, because the growing of beet is almost completely a post-war development. But it can, at any rate, readily be seen that a very trifling additional cost per man, is a very considerable item in total to a man who employs so largely as Sir Frederick Hiam.

Still, with all those substantial amounts to be paid in wages, I came away with the impression that there was a very satisfactory balance still left for those who are paying it, and I am perfectly certain that those who have their money in the beet factories have been doing substantially well out of it. I am not suggesting they don't deserve all they have got.

They have had to show a great deal of enterprise and have had to risk large amounts of capital. It would be little short of a tragedy if this sugar-beet industry could not be maintained without a continuance of a substantial State subsidy.

But that has to do with the economics of the situation, and with those I am not so much concerned at the moment. I am rather concerned just now, to suggest to our farmers down this way, that there is a great deal in the growing of beet for them, if there can be any assured stability for the next three or four years in the prices they are to get for their produce.

Any farmer is a fool to go on growing corn that does not pay him, when the growing of beet would. We have got to be prepared to adapt ourselves to changed conditions, but we are, of course, entitled to be assured of some measure of stability.

One of the things that struck me at the factory, was the virtual absence of anything in the way of waste in the process of sugar production. The beet comes in, in its raw state at one end, and at the other, we had the sugar ready for the table.

Practically all that has gone to waste has been the water which was in the beet. The pulp itself is dried and becomes quite a useful feeding product for cattle. This is sold back in the main to those who produce the beet, but just at present, there is not quite so good a market for it, because the price of corn is low.

We were told that the dried pulp is much to be preferred for the feeding, say, of dairy cattle than the raw mangold. It is relatively much cheaper, has better results in milk production, and is certainly more convenient to handle.

The chief drawback, perhaps, to the extensive growing of sugar-beet in this part of the country, is the cost of carriage to the factories. Some that is grown in the extreme West itself, does get shipped at Hayle for one or the other of the Scottish factories, but where the beet has to go from the West, right away to the East by rail, it makes the cost of production to the West Country farmer substantially more than it is to the farmer in the Eastern counties, who can get his production to the factory either by water or road.

Farming, of course, is a business from which those engaged in expect to see some adequate return, and therefore, it is necessary to concentrate on what will pay best.

But how uninteresting it seemed to those of us in the West, casting our eyes over the black lands of Cambridgeshire compared with the mixed farms, say, in this part of the country.

Hardly any sheep to be seen anywhere, very few cattle, and all the land just as flat as a billiard table. From the standpoint of pleasure to the eye, and perhaps, interest to the mind, give me the varied farming more common to our own parts.

You will never get me to believe that it is as pleasing to the eye to look upon a field of sugar beet, as it is to look at a herd of pedigree cattle grazing in some of our Western pastures. But that is neither here nor there. It need not be all cattle and it need not be all sugar beet. There can be reason in all things.

Worth Consideration.

I do, at any rate, as a result of my visit to the factory at Ely, want our West Country farmers just to wake up to the fact that there may be something in the production of sugar-beet that deserves their full consideration.

After all, anything that will lead to additional employment in this country deserves serious consideration in these times.

First of all, you get the additional employment on the land, then you get the employment in the factories, and you get all the secondary employment involved in the equipment of these factories, in the handling of the product, and in a hundred and one other ways in which activity in industry means labour.

The factory, which we so thoroughly inspected at Ely, cost over half a million of money to establish. Sixteen factories, more or less along the lines of the one at Ely, have been set up in this country since 1924.

This extension can be readily appreciated when one is told that there was an increase of 118,000 acres put down to beet growing in this country last year. And yet, we are told that the country could do with fifty such factories as we saw at Ely.

Even then, they would only produce about one third of the sugar, which is at the present time consumed in this country. It is an interesting fact in connection with sugar beet that the sugar content gets into the root by way of the leaf from the air.

The sugar is not produced by the soil. The soil produces the root, which holds the sugar.

Another interesting fact is that beet growing is good for the land. Those who have tried it are confident that the soil is very considerably benefitted.

One could go on relating interesting facts of this kind, but I think I've said more than enough to awaken some measure of interest down this way in the post war development in British agriculture.

I would just say in conclusion that Messrs. Tom, Brothers, of Tregildrans, Trelill, Wadebridge, act as the agents in this part of the country for the factories, and there is plenty of evidence that they are pretty keen about their job.

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# The Sugar Beet Industry.

## Norfolk Farmers Alarmed.

The Diss Express and Norfolk and Suffolk Journal, Friday, December the 26th, 1930.

The prospects of the sugar beet industry coming to an end, is causing no little alarm among the sugar beet grows of Norfolk. This fact was evident in the discussion on general prospects which took place at a meeting of the Norfolk Farmers Union executive, held under the chairmanship of Mr. A Lewis, at Norwich on Saturday.

### Preparations for Sugar Beet, held up.

Mr B Moore, in making his monthly report with regard to sugar beet matters, said it was impossible to give any reassuring information regarding contract conditions and prices for next year.

The National Farmers Union was still waiting for a definite offer from the factories in order that the negotiations might proceed. They knew from Parliamentary reports that the factory authorities had approached the Government, but they were not aware of the nature of the reply received. In the meantime, there did not appear to be any likelihood of an immediate advance in the price of sugar, and, judging from the recent decision of the Norfolk Wages Committee, costs of production would remain, as at present, in operation.

There was, of course, a genuine desire throughout the sugar beet growing areas, that the crop should be maintained in cultivation, but it was not a practical proposition unless the price was one that would warrant its continuance. He could not advise members until something definite was known as to preparing for next year's crop.

Many farmers were ruling out these possibilities. With regard to the excise duty question, it was purely a matter for the Treasury, and would be dealt with in the budget provisions.

Mr. Moore, replying to questions, said there had been meetings of the great sugar magnates, but he knew nothing of their decisions. They had a very big meeting at Brussels but did not come to any decision.

At the moment, sugar was somewhere in the region of 20 shillings per hundredweight, which was absolutely useless for their purpose. It had been down to 18 shillings, but had gone up a fraction. It was 7 shillings or 8 shillings a hundredweight less than three years ago, when they made their former contract.

The Americans and some of the others had come to an arrangement regarding Cuban sugar. It might take a year to come into effect. Whether our factories were going to sit still for a year, was a matter for them. Nothing was known at the moment.

Mr. J B Bennett said that it was useless to wait until the budget proposals were revealed before they received any information which would help them to decide whether they could grow sugar beet or not.

Mr. J F Wright said that he was afraid they would have to wait until the Chancellor of the Exchequer saw fit to answer the question about the excise duty. Farmers, through the Union, had made no request to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Bennett said that it was most essential that farmers should know that the question of time was of supreme importance. Could the growers manage to get this matter impressed upon him? If nothing was to be known about this suggested remission of the Excise duty before the end of March, then it would be too late for their purpose.

The chairman agreed that unless something was done, it would be impossible to arrange for a full crop of beet next year.

Mr. Dewing said it should not be overlooked that the sugar beet crop had saved large numbers of small farmers from bankruptcy.

Mr Cannell, speaking of the great need of definite information being obtainable immediately, said that the Government had been very unpractical in the way they had treated agriculture.

They appeared to think that it was to be settled just before sowing commenced; that showed their lack of understanding of all that was involved in the production of sugar beet. He favoured a deputation representing the growers and the factories to the Government, with a view to pressing upon them the points he had raised. Tremendous losses would result if the industry went to the wall.

In the course of further discussion which turned on the profits made by the sugar beet factory companies, Mr. J Alston said last year the subsidy was at the rate of £2 a ton, and the factory profits were nothing like it. The highest profits last year were made by the Ely factory to the extent of £100,000. As they crushed over 200,000 tons, it did not amount to 10 shillings per ton of sugar beet, the subsidy being £2.

Mr Dewing thought the Agricultural Labourers Organisation might join in the protest.

After a resolution that a joint deputation representing the farmers and the factories should wait upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been proposed, it was decided to leave the matter to the best policy to pursue in the hands of the National Farmers Union, Sugar Beet Committee.

## Efficiency with Economy.

Mr. E G Freeland, in presenting the report of the Finance Committee, said that on the expenditure side of the revenue account for the year, there was a reduction, although only a small one, as compared with last year. Bearing in mind the tremendous amount of work that had been undertaken, this saving was all to more remarkable. The decreased income, bearing in mind the embarrassed position of farmers, was not to be wondered at.

## The Wages Question.

The impossibility of carrying on farming under the regulations laid down by the Wages Committee was specially emphasised during the discussion on the recent decision of that Committee.

The Secretary, (Mr. J F Wright), said that in their demand for short-time payment, which was refused, the farmers in their appeal were fortified by the figures presented, as to the continued and serious decline in the prices of agricultural produce, notwithstanding decreased production.

Mr. Wright said that farmers must either employ fewer men in order to save the wages bill, or otherwise they would be penalised because by the Wages Board’s orders, they would have to pay a full week's wage to any man, although he was given only two days’ work. The Executive

felt they could not withhold the advice that owing to the present uneconomic position of the industry, there was no alternative but to advise the discharge of workers. They were greatly encouraged by the statement of Alderman Witard, a member of the Labour Party, who was one of the Norfolk Wage Committee's appointed members.

He had said that the present situation could not continue, and that something should be done immediately to put the industry in a strong position.

It was stated that very few of the specialised workers belonged to the labour movement, and the activities on the part of the labour leaders to get concessions in the shape of additional pay for holiday for these classes of workers, was nothing more than a bit of propaganda, with a view of enlisting their support.

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Lucky Escape.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, January the 2nd, 1931.

A steam lorry narrowly missed running into the river near the Ely Beet Sugar Factory on Friday.

It appears that a motor-lorry, driven by Lawrence Henry Murfett, of White Hart-Lane, was moving off to the weighing-in bridge, when a steam waggon belonging to Mr. S E Covell, Ely, driven by Mr. A Hibbit, of Downham-road, with Mr. Coulson, of Waterside, Ely, as fireman, returned from the factory, empty.

Coulson, on boarding the engine, accidentally put his hand on a lever which started the engine off on full power, and Hibbett, who at the time was on the footboard on the opposite side of the engine, oiling, just managed to prevent the engine from running into the river. In doing so, however, it collided with the lorry driven by Murfett, which was considerably damaged. Little damage was done to the engine and no-one was hurt.

Collision.

An accident occurred near the Ely Beet-Sugar Factory recently when a motor-lorry, laden with three tons of sugar-beet and driven by Harold Glover of School House, Snettisham, collided with a stationary lorry in the charge of Berry Wilfred Haddow, of Mepal.

Little damage was done, the rear lamp and number plate of Haddow's lorry being knocked off while the near-side mudguard and door of Glover's lorry were broken.

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Whispers and Echoes.

Sugar Beet Prices.

The Cornish Guardian, Thursday, January the 22nd, 1931.

It looks as if the representatives of the sugar beet factories are going to make an effort to obtain increased financial assistance for their industry from the Government; but whether they will be successful, with Mr. Snowden, surrounded by his present difficulties, remains to be seen.

The position now is, that after four months of desultory negotiations with the National Farmers Union, on the subject of the price for next season's beet crop, the factories have split. Of the 18 factories, including the Anglo-Scottish group of six, the Tate and Lyle group of four, and the Lincoln Group of two, twelve have offered the farmers 37 shillings and 6 pence for 17 and a half percent beet.

The five factories in the Anglo-Dutch group and the Wissington factory have not associated themselves with this offer, which has been rejected by the National Farmers Union who have made a counter-proposal.

The Union is asking for 40 shillings, for fifteen and a half percent beet, 43 shillings, for sixteen and a half percent beet, and 46 shillings, for seventeen and a half percent beet. That is an average of 43 shillings, and last year's price, I believe, averaged about fifty-one shillings, ten pence.

The factories, I gather, don't say to the farmer “Your demands are unreasonable.” They admit that the prices asked are reasonable enough, but they say that they simply cannot pay them. So, they are going to put the facts before the Government, no doubt, in the hope of enlisting further assistance for the sugar beet industry.

A Development.

Since the foregoing was written, I have come across the interesting announcement of the Anglo-Dutch group's proposals with regard to prices for sugar beet. This is the group which takes the beet grown by our Cornish farmers, and I paid a visit to one of its factories, that at Ely, only a month or two ago.

The Anglo-Dutch group's offer is quite properly described as a remarkable one. Like the other concerns in the industry, the group realises that it cannot pay the price is asked by the farmers, but instead of leaving matters there, with the intimation that the Government will be consulted.

The Anglo-Dutch group offers to treat this year's crop of beet at the bare costs of operation, plus an allowance for depreciation. As the financial editor of “The Times” has been pointing out, the Anglo-Dutch group is the most successful of the sugar beet factories. Its financial position is sound, thanks to heavy writing down of the fixed assets.

Thus, the allowance to be made for depreciation is not on the cost of the factory, but only on its heavily written down value. The group comprises the English Beet Sugar Corporation, which runs the Cantley and Kelham factories, the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, and the Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited. Clearly, no better offer can be made by the factories, unless the Government provides further assistance.

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## The Cultivation of Sugar Beet.

### Result of Experiments.

The Sleaford Gazette and Journal, Saturday, January the 24th, 1931.

The introduction of a new crop into farm practice creates a primary need for reliable information on numerous points, such as the characteristics of the different varieties of the crop, and their cultural and manurial treatment. With a crop like sugar beet, it is necessary, moreover, that this information shall cover not only the yield, but particularly its sugar content.

An interesting three years experiment has just been concluded on the Harper Adams College farm in Shropshire, where a study of the effect of one cultural factor, the spacing of the plants upon the yield and sugar content, has been made. It was found that no general relationship between sugar content and spacing was evident. There seemed to be some suggestion that in the season 1927, the sugar content decreased with increasing distance between the rows, but this was not verified in 1928 or 1929.

In the matter of yield, however, some interesting results were obtained. The evidence of the three years, (1927, 1928, and 1929) experiments in sugar beet growing, shows a very decided advantage in favour of narrow spacing of the rows. For example, in 1929, where rows had an even spacing of 12 inches, the yield per acre was 11.34 tons, and the sugar content percent was 18.24, whereas in plots where a 24-inch space was observed, the yields were 10.64 tons, and 18.15 percent sugar.

It will be observed that a marked and significant increase in tonnage takes place with decreasing distance between the rows. It is an exceedingly interesting fact that, unlike the effects of differing row widths, narrow spacing between plants gives no advantage, –at any rate up to a distance of 10 inches. These conclusions have considerable practical importance, since singling, being a hand operation, is one of the most tedious phases of beet cultivation, and is at the same time, one of the most difficult to regulate. Rowing, on the other hand, is mechanical, and it is merely a matter of contrivance to obtain narrow rows.

Weather Conditions.

It seems to become more evident that meteorological conditions have a profound effect on the yield and sugar content of the crop. In support of this statement, the average sugar content figures for the three years are interesting:

1927, 16.3 percent sugar.

1928, 17.4 percent sugar.

1929, 18.2 percent sugar.

In each case, it seems evident that the sunshine records are closely correlated with the sugar content. The weather during the growing periods of the three seasons 1927,1928, and 1929, offered great contrasts. In 1927, the rainfall was moderate in the spring and higher in the summer. The average daily period of sunshine was never high. The growing season of 1928 was, on the whole, less rainy. The daily sunshine average higher, except in the months of April and May.

In 1929, the rainfall was low, the number of days on which heavy rain fell were few, and there were many hours of sunshine. In each case, therefore, it is evident that the sunshine records are closely correlated with the sugar content.

It will be seen that the results of these experiments show: --

(1) that there is a decided advantage in favour of narrow spacing of the rows. This is corroborated by external evidence from county experiments, and it seems that expectation of consistently high yields can only be realised by narrow spacing:

(2) that meteorological conditions undoubtedly play an important part in control of yield and sugar content; and,

(3) that no general relationship between sugar content and spacing in the rows is evident.

Much additional information is given in the Ministries Journal for January, in which it will be found various tables summarising the results of other phases of the experiments.

## Sugar Factories and the Price of Beet.

### Three Resolutions.

The Anglo-Dutch group of beet sugar factory companies operating the factories at Cantley, Kelham, Ely, Ipswich and King's Lynn, have the following resolutions, and directed those copies be sent to the Minister of Agriculture, the National Farmers Union and to the press:

(a) That the Government and the National Farmers Union be informed that having regard to the position of the sugar market, it is impossible to offer the farmers a price for beets which approximates to that recommended for acceptance by the Sugar Beet Committee of the National Farmers Union.

(b) That the Anglo-Dutch Group is prepared to operate its factories for the manufacture of white sugar from home grown beet for the season 1931, not for the purpose of making profits for the shareholders and, or, increasing its reserves, but in order to utilise the whole net profits of such manufacturer in payment to farmers for beets delivered.

(c) Provision for depreciation at 5 percent on factory buildings and machinery, as standing in the balance sheets dated, 31st of March, 1930, will be made before arriving at the net proceeds, which will be ascertained on the basis of the accounts for the year as audited by Messrs. Price Waterhouse and Company.

(d) That the foregoing proposals are subject to their acceptance by the Sugar Beet Committee of the National Farmers Union by notice to be given to the Anglo-Dutch Group at their offices, Inveresk House, 346, Strand, WC2., on, or before, Monday, February the 16th, 1931.

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## Sugar Beet in Ely district.

The Bury Free Press, Saturday, February the 21st, 1931.

Sugar beet growers in the Ely district, one of the largest beets growing areas in the country, are in a state of alarm over the length of time occupied by the Anglo-Dutch Company in arriving at a settlement of prices.

Nothing has been definitely settled, but Sir Frederick Hiam, chairman of the local branch of the National Farmers Union, has announced his resignation as a director of the Ely Beet Sugar factory, because he did not agree with the offer the Company had made to the farmers.

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The Sugar-Beet Deadlock.

Figures “Startling Discrepancy”

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, March the 6th, 1931.

The following are extracts from a letter which Colonel R G M Wilson, of Cambridge, wrote on Monday, to the manager of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory:

“As you are aware, a public meeting of farmers and others interested in the sugar beet industry was held at Ely on Thursday last, February the 26th, to hear from Sir Frederick Hiam and a small committee, the results of a meeting which they had held with Mr. Van Rossum on the question of sugar beet prices offered by the Anglo-Dutch group for the coming season.”

“At this public meeting, those present were informed that, on the basis of the present price of sugar, the price per ton of sugar beet containing fifteen and a half percent sugar, which would be paid by the Anglo-Dutch group, to the farmer, would work out at approximately thirty-three shillings, and that this was the figure supplied by Mr. Van Rossum himself.”

“It was the unanimous opinion of the meeting that sugar beet could not be grown profitably at that figure.”

“On Saturday, I had to visit Cambridge Corn Exchange, and I was informed that the representatives of the Ely factory were stating that the price for the coming season for sugar beet containing fifteen and a half percent of sugar, based upon the present price of sugar, would work out at approximately thirty-seven shillings and six pence per ton.”

“I consequently went straight to the Ely Beet Sugar Factory’s stand, at which you, Sir, were present, together with Major Fowler, Mr. Venn, Mr. Seth, and two or three other agents. I was personally assured that the figure should be somewhere about thirty-seven shillings, to thirty-eight shillings and six pence, one agent going to the length of stating that he had just worked it out again, and the figure came to forty shillings and nine pence.”

“The discrepancy between the figure given by Mr Van Rossum, namely thirty-three shillings, and those given by the representatives of the Ely factory at Cambridge on Saturday, which varied from thirty-seven shillings, and sixpence, to forty shillings, and nine pence per ton, is so startling, Sir, that I appeal to you, in common fairness to all those who wish to continue to grow sugar beet, to give a straight answer to this question, namely: --"

“What is, in your opinion, a fair figure for farmers to expect to receive for a ton of sugar-beet of fifteen and a half percent, delivered to your factory in the coming season if the price of sugar remains at its present level?”

“For the past six years, Sir, I have grown sugar-beet for the Ely beet factory only, and during that time I have always stated, (in spite of many contrary opinions expressed to me), that I was convinced in my own mind that the Anglo-Dutch group, and the Ely factory in particular, had given the farmers an absolutely square deal.”

“These convictions have been severely shaken by the conflicting statements mentioned above, and it is because I believe that only on the basis of complete confidence between the grower and the factory, can the sugar beet industry be established, that I am forwarding a copy of this letter to the press.”

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Beet Contract Conditions.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, March the 13th, 1931.

Information to hand appears to indicate that the open contract offer of the Anglo-Dutch group has been reluctantly accepted by local beet growers, and that a large number of contracts have been signed during the past fortnight.

The acceptance has been reluctant because, apart from the fact that the ultimate price remains uncertain, it was known that the Anglo-Dutch group has financial reserves very substantial in amount.

When, it was stated that at the present price of sugar, the grower for the Ely factory under the open contract might expect to receive 33 shillings a ton for fifteen and a half percent beet, the contrast between that figure and the 38 shillings offered by the Anglo-Scottish group struck the Fen grower as surprising, to say the least.

Such growers found it difficult to understand why a group of factories in so strong a financial position, should not feel able to offer definite terms as good as those offered elsewhere. When, however.

It became known that Mr. Van Rossum had said his last word, and that the offer wore the, “Take it or leave it" aspect, the grower had practically no alternative.

The situation was eased by the undertaking to pay on account 30 shillings per ton for clean beets delivered of fifteen and a half percent sugar content, with an addition or deduction to be made at the rate of two shillings and six pence for each one percent above or below fifteen and a half percent.

What the contract conditions convey, in brief, is that the owners run the factories for the period without charging depreciation or directors’ fees, and without appropriations for dividends or reserves, while the growers take the whole of the net proceeds.

These net proceeds will be maintained in amount by the sales of sugar, pulp, and molasses.

So that the beet growers alone now make a venture on the future price of sugar, whereas, hitherto, the factories exclusively have taken that risk. By May, 1932, and not till then, will each grower know what balance, (if any) he has to receive.

There will be no difficulty, we may be sure, in arranging ways and means of satisfying growers, that contract conditions during the season are being fairly carried out. And the smaller acreage likely to be grown may be expected to relieve the congestion experienced at most factories during the past season.

The Farmer’s Union has made a strong stand in the interest of beet-growers.

If their success has only been partial, it has been due to the particular character of the triangular negotiations and the division on the front presented by the factories.

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Alleged Ouse Pollution

Nicholls verses Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

Resumed Hearing in Chancery Division.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, March the 13th, 1931.

In the Chancery Division, Mr Justice Farwell, has continued the hearing of the important action for injunction, whose earlier stages were reported in the Lynn Advertiser last week. Mr. Charles Thurston Nicholls, of 41, Claverton Street, S.W., claims to be the owner of two fisheries in the River Ouse in the Isle of Ely and Norfolk, against Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, of 6, Lancaster Place,WC2., whose factory for the manufacture of beet-sugar is at Ely, for an injunction to restrain them, their servants, workmen, and agents from discharging from their factory or works, any foul or other noxious or injurious matter or liquid, so as to pollute the water of the River Ouse, and to cause damage or injury to the fish therein, or prejudicially affect the plaintiffs fisheries, or either of them.

Mr. Nicholls, claims as the owner in possession of two fisheries in part of the River Ouse, one beginning at High Bridge, Littleport, and extending to Brandon Creek, and the other beginning at Brandon Creek and extending to Modney Drove, Southery. These are stated to be some of the best coarse fishing in the country. The defendants are a company which was formed in 1924 for the manufacture of beet-sugar, and the factory, which abuts on the River Ouse above High Bridge, where the plaintiffs' fisheries begin, was erected in 1925.

The defendants deny the alleged pollution.

Mr. Gover, K.C., Mr. Stuart Moore, and Mr. Elkin appeared for the plaintiff; Mr. Fergus Morton, K.C., and Mr Norman Daynes, K.C., for the defendants.

On Thursday, Mr. Gover continued his opening speech, (reported last week), tracing the plaintiff's title to the fisheries down to the conveyance to the plaintiff on June 29th, 1909, of the Littleport Fishery, and in 1917 of the Southery Fishery.

Mr. Charles Thurston Nicholls, giving evidence, said that he had paid rates for the fisheries since 1915. In November, 1928, he had complaints from his tenants, and he inspected the river in December. He again inspected it during the beet "campaigns" of 1929 and 1930, the river was of a very bad colour, and the weeds were covered with slime. He saw hundreds of dead fish. He also saw the effluent coming out of the defendant's pipes.

Cross-examined, Mr. Nicholls said that he paid £108 for the Littleport fishery. He did not know that the price was low because there were grave doubts as to the title. The Southery fishery he bought for £200. He wished for an injunction, even though the defendants had taken the best advice and adopted the best possible means suggested, for avoiding damage. Re-examined, he said that no one had ever set up a right to fish in his waters. He had no desire to part with his fisheries, and had not brought this action to obtain a larger price. He had known the river for 50 years, but before the defendants started work, he had never known any pollution.

Mr. Edward J. Silcock, senior partner in the firm of Messrs. Silcock and Simpson, consulting engineers, Leeds. (Mr. Silcock is a former borough engineer of Lynn), said he was constantly consulted as to the disposal of effluents. He was instructed by the plaintiff in January, 1929, and had paid numerous visits to the place from January 26th, 1929, to November the 11th, 1930. The effluent consisted of the wash water, the process water, the water which came from

the pressing, and the water for washing the utensils. The wash water would be three fourths of the whole, but the process water was the most objectionable.

On his first visit, he found evidence of deposit on the banks of the river, and saw a great number of dead fish, of which, in 100 yards, he counted more than eighty. He had no doubt that the deposit came from the factory. There was a certain amount of pollution from the sewage works at Ely, but it was very small. In January 1929, he had no doubt from his experience that the fishes had been seriously affected. The effluent would absorb all the free oxygen in the water. In July, 1929, the character of the water in the river had improved. Fish were moving about in the river and he saw then no dead fish.

He paid another visit on December the 23rd, 1929, when the “campaign” had been at work since September. There was a very offensive discharge in large quantities, and owing to the scum, the boat could not be rowed up the creek. The effluent was bound to find its way into the river.

At the resumed hearing on Friday, Mr. Silcock was further examined by Mr. Gover. He said that on October the 15th, 1930, at the beginning of the autumn beet “campaign”, he went to the defendant's works to examine their new plant, which consisted of settling tanks. The tanks enabled the water to be used again, instead of being discharged into the river at once. Lime was employed to assist precipitation. The plant was working satisfactorily on the occasion of that visit, the water discharged into the river being perfectly clear, although it had a slight smell of beet.

He next visited the neighbourhood on November the 11th, 1930, and found that the system of purification was not being followed up. There was a good deal of sewage fungus near the bank of the river where the effluent was being discharged from a large pipe. Scum was swirling round, and going upstream, another pipe was discharging hot and discoloured water, and yet another was emitting coloured matter and causing froth on the surface of the river. Sewage fungus was very noticeable half a mile down the river. He had no doubt that it was caused by pollution from the factory.

In cross-examination by Mr. Morton, the witness said that on November the 11th 1930, he did not ask anyone at the factory for an explanation of what he saw, and it did not occur to him that the pollution was due to an accident. Sewage fungus would not grow simply because hot water was discharged into the river. On his first visit on January the 26th, 1929, he noticed that some eel baskets were covered with slime. He agreed that the more lagoons there were for the suspension of impure matter, the better. In his opinion, between 4 million and 5 million gallons of water a day were used at the factory during a “campaign”. It was in January, 1929, that he noticed the dead fish in the river. He agreed that there were fish in the river in July, 1929, but not plenty. It would surprise him to learn that at the end of that year, fish were placed in the river in cages, and were taken out alive 15 days afterwards. There was a very efficient sewage farm at Cambridge. He agreed that the confluence of the River Cam might somewhat pollute the Ouse. Other expert evidence having been given in support. Of the plaintiff's case, the hearing was adjourned until Tuesday.

When the hearing resumed on Tuesday, Professor Henry Smith Holden, of Nottingham University, and a member of the Freshwater Biological Society, giving evidence, said that he had had long experience of effluents in rivers. He was instructed by the Ouse and Cam Fisheries Board to make an inspection of the River Ouse in the neighbourhood of the defendant’s factory, and did so on October the 26th, 1929. He saw the effluent coming from the factory and took a sample of the river water at that point and placed fish and freshwater shrimps in it. They died in a very short time. He also put roach in a solution taken from the

river half a mile below the factory, and they died in 35 minutes. Cross examined by Mr. Morton, the witness said that he carried his samples of the water to Nottingham.

The effluent might deteriorate on the way. In his opinion, fish could not survive two beet "campaigns". He knew that beet-sugar factories had been endeavouring to find the best way of treating their effluents.

Mr. James Brierly Firth, Senior Lecturer at Nottingham University and Technical Advisor to the Trent Fisheries Board, said that on October the 26th, 1929, on the instruction of the Ouse and Cam Fisheries Board, he inspected the defendant's factory. The witness described the treatment of the effluent in the factory, which he considered unsatisfactory. He described the difference between samples of the river-water which he had taken above and below the factory. The effluent had a very serious effect on the river.

Mr. Cecil Holmes Roberts, examined by Mr Gover, said that he was the naturalist in charge of the research station at Alresford, and had been engaged for 10 years under the Ministry of Agriculture in the consideration of river problems. He had permission from the Ministry to give evidence. He had visited all the beet factories in England. The Ely factory was the biggest of them all. In October, 1929, the water in the Ouse below the Ely factory was bad. He went again in November, 1929, and January 1930, and the river had much improved. He paid a further visit in November, 1930, when the new filter which had been installed was at work. The amount of pollution had improved, but there was still some pollution.

Cross-examined by Mr. Morton, the witness said that he considered that the present system in use at Ely was an improvement on the formal one. If the system was properly worked, little water causing pollution would be discharged into the river.

Evidence for the plaintiff was continued on Wednesday.

Mr. Bonavia Hunt, examined by Mr. Gover said that he had lived at Littleport for many years, and had fished there. He gave evidence as to the alleged pollution of the river when the factory was started. After the beet "campaign" was begun in 1930, the pollution was less, but on September the 24th of that year, the water was of a yellow colour and he saw many small fish come to the surface, evidently in distress. About the third week in October, he again saw fish in distress. No good fish had been caught lately. Cross-examined by Mr. Morton, the witness said he had been a member of the Ouse and Cam Fisheries Board since its formation in 1919. He did not remember that in 1918, the Ouse below Littleport Bridge was choked up, and had to be cleared by the Board of Agriculture. He was a member of a committee which, in October, 1930, reported that the factory had been taking great trouble to stop pollution. On September the 28th, 1930, a fishing competition was held in the Ouse just below the factory, and a large number of fish were caught. On September the 24th, 1930, he took a sample of river-water where he saw the fish in distress near the factory. It was analysed and found to contain plenty of oxygen. He had reported to Major Fowler at the factory in October, 1930, that the river was all right. During the 1930 "campaign", he had only noticed an odour from the river once, and that faintly. Re-examined by Mr Gover, he said that formerly he used to catch bream in the river of a good size, but caught none now.

Mr. Justice Farwell said that the really important point to which evidence, apart from the plaintiff's title, should be directed, was the state of the river in 1930, after the new filter had been installed in the factory. The previous condition might be important on the question of damages, but not as to the claim for an injunction.

Mr. Edward Green, of Littleport, the plaintiff's secretary, said that on October the 23rd, 1930, he found that the pipe from the factory across the river had burst and was discharging effluent

into the river. The fungus on the bank below the factory was worse than he had ever seen it before. On November the 1st, 1930, he found a thick white scum on the bank opposite the factory. He again paid a visit on November the 11th, and found the water from the pipe discoloured and saw much fungus. Cross-examined by Mr. Morton, he did not admit that the water which he saw coming from the pipe, was river water, coming only from the condenser. The case was further adjourned.

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Fenland Beet-Growing.

A Factory Manager's Views.

Beets High in Sugar, but Low in Purity.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, March the 13th, 1931.

At the annual dinner of the Ramsey branch of the National Farmers Union, Captain Mowbray, managing director of the Central Sugar Company, Peterborough, was requested to speak on the beet question, and in the course of his reply, spoke of the considerations in selecting a site for a factory. –a supply of beets which, being the largest tonnage, should be carried as short a distance as possible, coal., -- of which they used something like 30,000 tons a year, and limestone., --of which they used 12 or 15,000 tons., --the distribution of sugar, for they would like to be where there were many potential purchasers. The ideal site would meet all these considerations.

To keep the Peterborough factory out of the question, he invited them to compare the positions of the Ely and of the Colwick factories. He had something to do with the selection of the site for the latter. It was not the best beet-growing area, but was within two miles of a coal mine, and also was close to the Derbyshire limestone. There was also a large potential market of consumers at the door. They could therefore just afford to pay carriage on the beets a little further.

Ely on the other hand, was an excellent beet growing district, which probably could produce a ton of beets as cheaply as anywhere in Europe. But they paid more for coal, limestone, and carriage on sugar, and they had to pay a little less for beets. Had it been the custom to buy beets on rail that would have balanced itself, more or less, but as their policy was always to buy on a delivery basis, the Ely factory had some difficulties to overcome. These were accentuated by the Government's offer of a subsidy applicable only to the first 15,000 tons. A small factory would put out 15,000 tons and get one shilling three pence.

At Ely they made 40,000 tons, and the additional help from the Government would be four pence, five pence, or at the most, six pence, per hundredweight. They paid farmers only on sugar content, but they ought to take the purity of the juices into consideration. Beets high in sugar, but low impurity went into the molasses tank, a product that was down from sixty shillings, to five shillings., whereas with low sugar content, and high purity, it would not be a very serious matter, as they would pay for a certain proportion of sugar, and would get a certain amount of sugar out. In this respect the Peterborough factory probably was the third worst of the lot, and impurity cost them in certain conditions two shillings or three shillings per ton. Last year they had, probably unfortunately, doubled the capacity of the factory.

They had always been offered more beets than they could use. They felt they had a duty to the farmers, to the men who worked for them, and to the nation, as well as to the shareholders,

and when the growers were supporting them, they thought they should try and take care of the increasing business.

As it turned out, it looked like bad business.

They had carefully studied the Government proposal, and he had never allowed business to keep him awake for so many nights as that did. Taking the conditions into account, they had tried to spread the benefits over as larger number of people as possible.

They had encouraged a big list of growers, preferring two contracts of fifty acres to one of a hundred, and they had wanted to help the smallholder who was having a struggle. It cost more in bookkeeping etc, but that did not matter. “We were in this position. Going through our figures to try to cut down costs, we found that estimating what we could get out of a ton of beets next autumn on the price the Government suggested, it was impossible to make it come out even.

We would have lost a good deal of money, many thousands of pounds, a good deal more than we could afford. We had to decide whether we were justified in taking the crop and deliberately going ahead to lose money, or closing the door until the thing got better, or making the same generous proposal as the Anglo-Dutch.

We did not feel that either of the other policies was a commercial proposition. We would have to drop the additional subsidy, which might have helped, in the smaller factories, three shillings and sixpence, and in our case, probably one shilling and sixpence.

We had to give the regulation contract or drop that one shilling and sixpence, and also the estimated loss. I had enough faith in the farmers we did business with, to know that not one of you would want us to go on losing money.

You don't want to get in with a factory that may be able to pay and may not. You would rather do business with a firm on commercial lines, and know that you would get your money. You would not want us to operate in such a way that there would be a question as to whether we could operate next year or the year after.

You want us, as far as we can see, for all years to come, – (here, here), --and I felt it was much better from the farmers standpoint, to take a little less this year, and help us through the crisis. Rightly or wrongly, that was the position we took up.

My faith has been justified, because when we put this position plainly to the growers, we had a magnificent response, particularly from this part of the country. We have had all of the acreage we can accept, and we are in the position of having to ration it, and have had to ask people to take half the contract they offered.”

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Accident.

The Newmarket Journal, Saturday, November the 21st, 1931.

While working at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory on Saturday afternoon, Mr. Robert F Tucker, (nephew of Mrs. H Blythe, Ness Rd, Burwell), was severely injured through an explosion. He is in Addenbrooke’s Hospital and is progressing slowly.

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The Sugar Campaign.

End of operations in sight.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, December the 4th, 1931.

The Central Sugar Company's campaign at the Peterborough Beet Sugar Factory is expected to end not later than the first week of the new year. It is probable that the factory will close down even earlier than that; during the week between Christmas and the New Year.

The Ely Factory.

Rumour having been circulated that Ely beet sugar factory is to bring its season to a close on Saturday, December the 19th, our representative enquired yesterday afternoon, and was informed that the rumour is correct.

No beet is to be accepted at the factory after the night of December the 19th, and cutting operations will cease two or three days after the receipt of the last consignment. In consequence of the early closing of the factory, growers will be well advised to expedite delivery of their crops.

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Round the Farm.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, December the 18th, 1931.

Like other factories, the Ely factory is closing earlier this year, having notified growers that beets will not be received after tomorrow, (Saturday.)

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Unemployment in Cambridge.

Peak Figures Reported.

Economies Blamed.

Increase Also in Rural Areas.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 12th, 1932.

Further details of the extent of increased unemployment in the Cambridge area emerged in a report presented by the manager of the Employment Exchange, (Mr. W Westin), to the Cambridge and District Employment Committee at a meeting held on Tuesday, February the 2nd.

Professor J H Clapham, Litt.D., (Doctor of Literature), CBE., (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), FBA., (Fellow of the British Academy), presided: --and members present included, Messrs. E V Burgess, J O Bennett, W H Claxton, G Cook, L Doggett, H S Driver, H Gurteen, Major O Papworth, Mrs. C D Rackham, Mr. S C Lamb and Mr. A Thompson.

## Secretary's Report.

The main business centred in the review of the unemployment situation. The report before the committee disclosed that in Cambridge, unemployment had reached an unprecedented post-war level, the figures being 1,433 men and 280 women. The men's figure was practically double that of the normal volume of unemployment in the Cambridge Exchange area, comprising the Borough and a shallow rural belt surrounding. Causes lay in the general economy measures, arising out of the current financial stringency.

## Building Trades Affected.

With the passing of the activity of the Christmas season, unemployment had accelerated sharply, the building trades being particularly affected. With the exception of the radio industry, slackness in local undertakings was general. With the inclusion of general labourers, practically half the employment reposed in the building trades. As regards women, the surplus of daily domestics was unusually high, and this, coupled with exceptional slackness in the tailoring and needlework trades, accounted mainly for the increase in this section. The position was characterised as quite unstable, and any early and substantial improvement was difficult to forecast. The fact that the Cambridge district was experiencing peak figures for the first time during the several years that industrial depression had been current, and at a time when small, but important improvements in the employment situation were being experienced in the more industrial areas of the North and Midlands, tended to show that the position locally was very responsive to the degree of national prosperity.

## Rural Areas.

Increased employment was also general in the rural areas, particularly at Newmarket, where 896 men and 81 women were registered as unemployed. For the Ely area, some hope of improvement centred in the prospect of extended sugar refining operations at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory to be commenced possibly in March.

Elsewhere, prospects of improvement were uncertain.

State-aided relief schemes tended to become negligible as those in operation became completed. No fresh schemes were arising.

## Placing Work.

The Secretary reported that special steps were being taken in an endeavour to consolidate the "placing" position that the Cambridge Exchange and attached branch employment offices had attained during the past few years.

There was a tendency of a retrograde movement to set in, as a result of the difficulties of the employment situation, and this had to be faced. High unemployment figures did not mean any reduction in the facilities for helping employers in their labour requirements, as this section of the Exchange work was organised to give the same measure of service whatever the industrial situation.

This section of the report showed that during the 14 weeks ended the 25th of January, 1932, the Cambridge Exchange had placed 418 men, (including 149 men placed with the Post Office for the Christmas season), and 227 females. The branch offices collectively, had placed 583 men, and 36 women, making a grand total for the area of 1,264 placings in 14 weeks.

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Ely Beet Factory's mammoth sugar store.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, March the 11th, 1932.

Photographs and caption.

Caption reads: Almost every year witnesses an improvement of one kind or another in the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. This year a very important improvement has been carried out by way of the provision of enormously increased space for the storage of sugar. Work on the store has just been completed, and the extra facilities for accommodating sugar supplies may be gained from our pictures. Of these, the upper one gives a striking impression of the additional floor space, while the lower one clearly indicates the length of the new structure as added to the old store-room. The store has been erected by Messrs Walker Weston, Limited, of London, who commenced work upon it in December of last year.

The Cambridgeshire Times 11th March 1932

ELY BEET FACTORY'S MAMMOTH SUGAR STORE.

Photos] [Starr & Rignall, Ely

Almost every year witnesses an improvement of one kind or another in the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. This year a very important improvement has been carried out by way of the provision of enormously increased space for the storage of sugar. Work on the store has just been completed, and the extra facilities for accommodating sugar supplies may be gained from our pictures. Of these, the upper one gives a striking impression of the additional floor space, while the lower one clearly indicates the length of the new structure as added to the old store-room. The store has been erected by Messrs. Walker Weston, Ltd., of London, who commenced work upon it in December of last year.

The following two images indicate the position of the new store on the plans, and an overhead photograph of its position on the Factory site.

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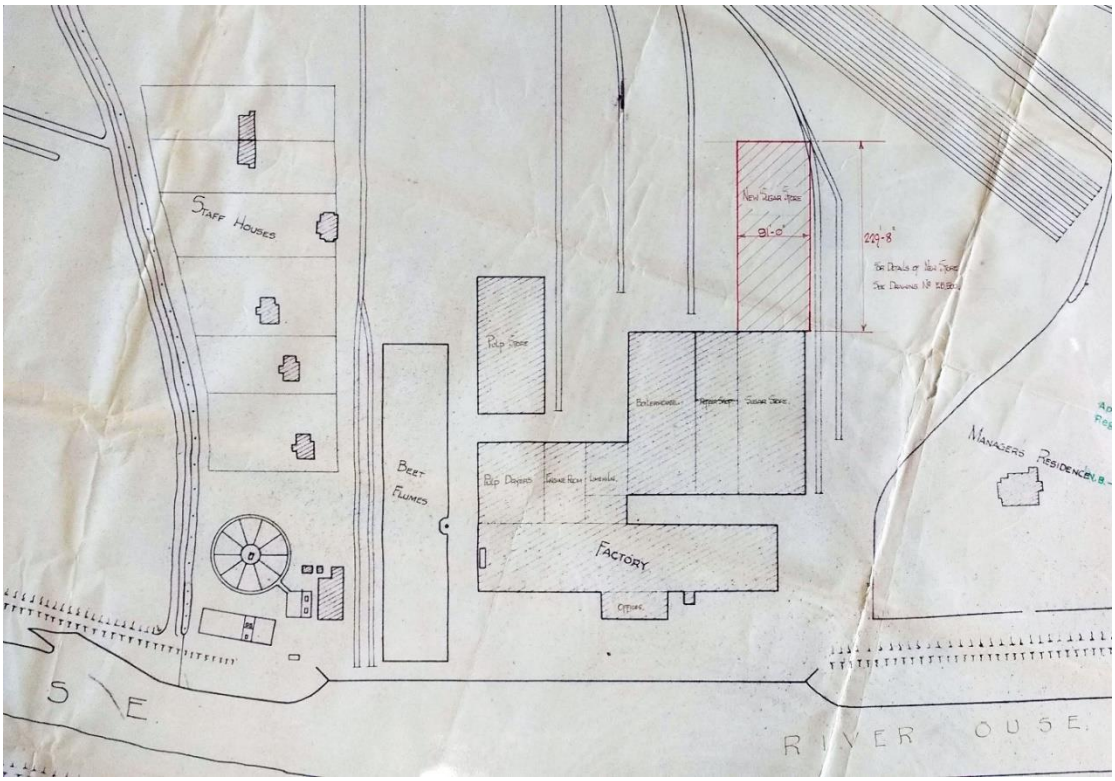


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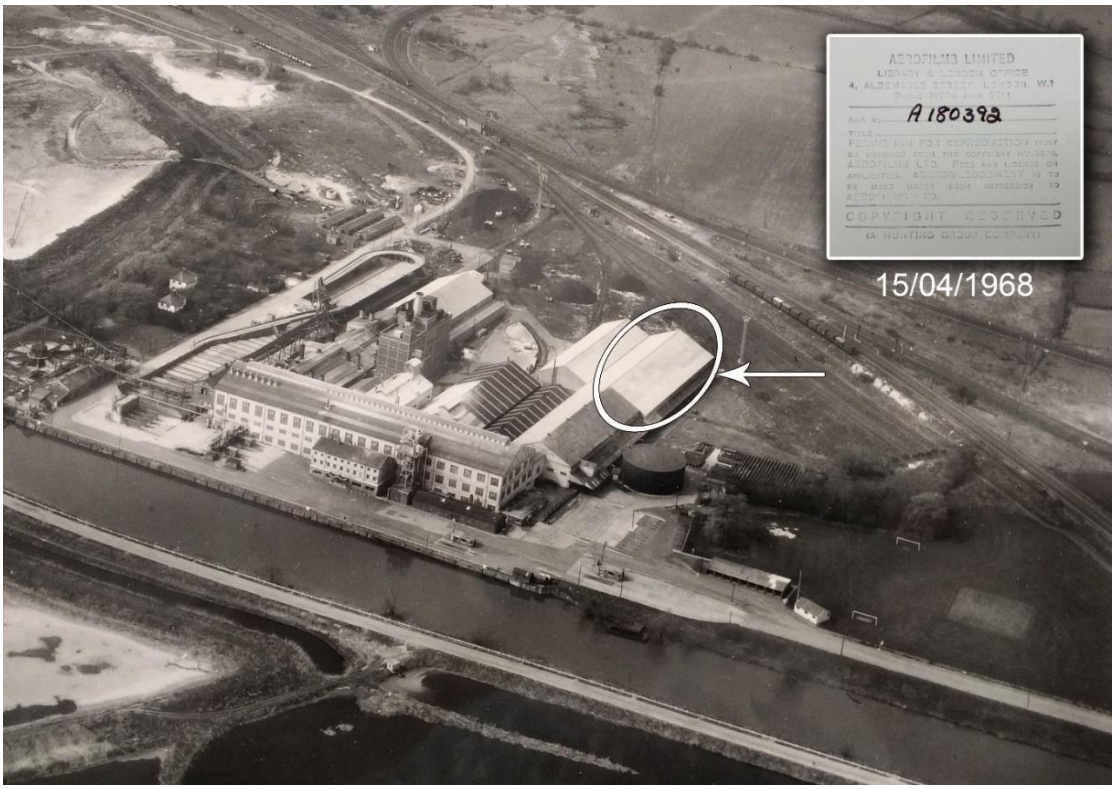

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Beet Factory Closure.

The Bury Free Press and Post, Saturday, March the 12th, 1932.

The English Beet Sugar Corporation, (Limited), the lessees of the Kelham, (Newark), beet sugar factory, have intimated to the farmers who have offered to accept contracts for beets for this season's campaign, that it is not possible to obtain a sufficient acreage to work the factory during the coming manufacturing season.

The Company point out, that only when the growers collectively offer an acreage and deliver from such acreage, a reasonable yield to enable a factory to work at full capacity, a price reasonable to the grower can result. The acreage offered has fallen much short of that, hence the decision to close down.

The factory was erected in 1921, by the Home-Grown Sugar Company, (Limited). It was leased in 1924 to the English Beet Sugar Corporation, which controls factories at Cantley, Lynn, Ely and Ipswich.

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The Home-Grown Sugar Industry.

Country Life Magazine, Saturday, April the 9th, 1932.

Within recent months, persistent attempts have been made to discredit the sugar beet industry in this country, on the grounds that the country is not getting full value for the State assistance afforded to the industry. Whatever may be the actual position as regards the absorption of profits from State aid by the factories as distinct from the growers, it has to be recognised that the beet sugar crop has been a steadying asset during years of severe depression in the arable districts.

Without any question whatever, the plight of many arable farmers would have been even more serious but for this one crop, and on these grounds alone, the expenditure in the form of Government aid has justified itself purely on social grounds. The Subsidy Act, has helped to build up in the short space of eight years, an industry capable of producing over 400,000 tons of sugar per annum, or one-fifth of our annual consumption. In actual fact, there are eighteen factories at present in existence, which have cost £9,000,000 to erect. The labour required for the growth of the crop and for the manufacture of the sugar itself is considerable; while in the absence of this industry the labour position on many arable farms would have been disastrous.

Great Britain is not in an isolated position as regards the granting of State aid to establish and maintain the beet sugar industry. In the 1931-32 season, the total State assistance to the industry represented a sum of £2,750,000, which compares favourably with the aid granted by other producing countries. Approximately 80 percent of the world production of sugar, of both cane and beet extraction, is subsidised or protected. The effective total State assistance to the beet sugar industry in terms of pounds sterling per ton of sugar produced is £14 in Germany, £10 in France, £13 in Czecho-Slovakia, £14.08 in Poland, £14.58 in Italy, and £10.75 in the United Kingdom. Other European countries cling to their beet sugar industry on social and agricultural grounds.

Sugar beet is one of the staple crops in any scheme of intensive farming which is destined to improve the output of agricultural land. Although, on a basis of pure economics, the present position of beet sugar appears on paper to be an extravagance by comparison with the world price of cane sugar, it must not be overlooked that tropical sugar production is aided by cheap coloured labour, and therefore introduces factors which have no bearing on sugar production in other countries.

No one who has the best interest of agriculture at heart, can support any scheme which would remove State aid from the scope of sugar production in this country. This help agrees with the generally accepted principles that the country should become more self-supporting. To the farmer, the crop is an asset both indirect as well as direct. It gives him the opportunity of growing a crop, for which a certain market exists, and at a previously fixed price. The cultivation of the crop involves the employment of a standard of farming and cultivations. This tends to stimulate an all-round improvement of general husbandry.

The crops succeeding beet, are, invariably superior in consequence of the increased fertility resulting from the crop, while the crowns and leaves make a most valuable stock food. In addition to this, the dried beet pulp, which is a by-product from the factories, is available to growers at a very favourable price, and it has proved a most valuable food for livestock for winter feeding. These are assets which, collectively, no farmer on land suitable to the crop can afford to ignore. In themselves, they are of equal economic interest to the nation.

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Sugar Beet.

Case for continued assistance.

The Spalding Guardian, Saturday, May the 7th, 1932.

At the annual meeting of the British Sugar Beet Society in London, Colonel E Royds, Chairman of the Committee, said that the area under sugar beet cultivation for 1932 was 230,000 acres. Although that was 50,000 in excess of the of the 1931 acreage, it was still 80,000 acres below the high-water mark of 1930. The yield for 1931, was 7.1 tons per acre as compared with 8.8 tons in 1930, but the sugar content was high, the average being 17.3 percent compared with 16.7 percent in the previous year. Considering the wet and sunless summer of 1931, that was a gratifying feature.

Mrs Haigh-Thomas, (London), offered a cup for the best seed produced from “native mother seed, and consideration of this offer was promised by Colonel Royds, who said that what was wanted was a proper sugar beet seed breeding station in Britain, but the cost would be about £10,000 a year.

Mr F Rayns, director of the Norfolk Agricultural Station, said that farmers must make a determined effort to fit the sugar beet crop into their rotational farming as a whole, rather than regard it as something to be exploited as a profitable sideline.

Subsidy Justified.

At a luncheon of the Society, Earl, De La Warr, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, said there was a strong case for the continued assistance of the Government to the sugar beet industry. The subsidy legislation would come to an end in another two years.

“We are all of us,” said Earl De La Warr, “anxious and determined to see that this industry that has been built up by so much labour and effort, is carried on after those two years have elapsed.” Earl De La Warr presented prizes for sugar beet growers and their agricultural workers.

The Silver Cup, presented to the Ministry of Agriculture by Mr Alfred Wood, for the prize winner who had either grown or had made the best effort to grow the best crop of the year, was awarded to Mr. A J Hewitt, North Burlingham, Norfolk, who on just over 9 acres of heavy land, grew for the Cantley factory, 17.71 tons of washed beet per acre, of 17.85 percent average sugar content. The judges highly commend the crops grown by Messrs. Mossman and Stratton for the Spalding factory on 35 acres, and Mr. J W West for the Ely factory on 78 acres.

Other prize-winners included: --

Colwick Factory. —Messrs. J B Dalton, (Swineshead), F Slater, (Spalding),

Kelham Factory. —W R Williamson, (Sleaford),

Kings Lynn Factory. —Messrs. J Jakes, (Terrington saint Clements), F H Hickman, (Tydd), Sir W W West, (Wisbech),

Spalding Factory. —Messrs. L Brabben, (Sutton Bridge),

W Ward, (Surfleet Marsh), J Wright, (Surfleet), Mossman and Stratton, (Ramsey).

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Fish and Beet-Sugar Factories.

First Campaign Without Destructive Effluent.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, May the 13th, 1932.

In the annual report of the Ouse and Cam Fishery Board, for the year ended 1931, it is stated that for the first time there has been a beet-sugar campaign without any destruction of fish life therefrom.

“To realise to the full extent what this means,” observes the report, “it is only necessary to hark back to the disastrous events of 1929, and the four or five years immediately preceding.

The opening of a campaign, in each of those years was followed immediately by a slaughter of fish.

The Bury factory was the first to put its house in order, with the result that since 1928, the River Lark has been gradually improving, and is now stated to be carrying a good head of fish, including trout.

The greatest slaughter of all occurred in 1929, following which the Board took action against the factories at Ely and Wissington.

Before the 1930 campaign opened, the Ely factory installed, at considerable expense, the most up-to-date type of plant for dealing with this effluent. The Wissington factory also

improved its system. In 1930 very little damage was done, and during 1931, no damage at all."

"It is true," adds the report, "that during the campaigns of those two years, the rivers were running high, and capable of coping with a certain amount of pollution.

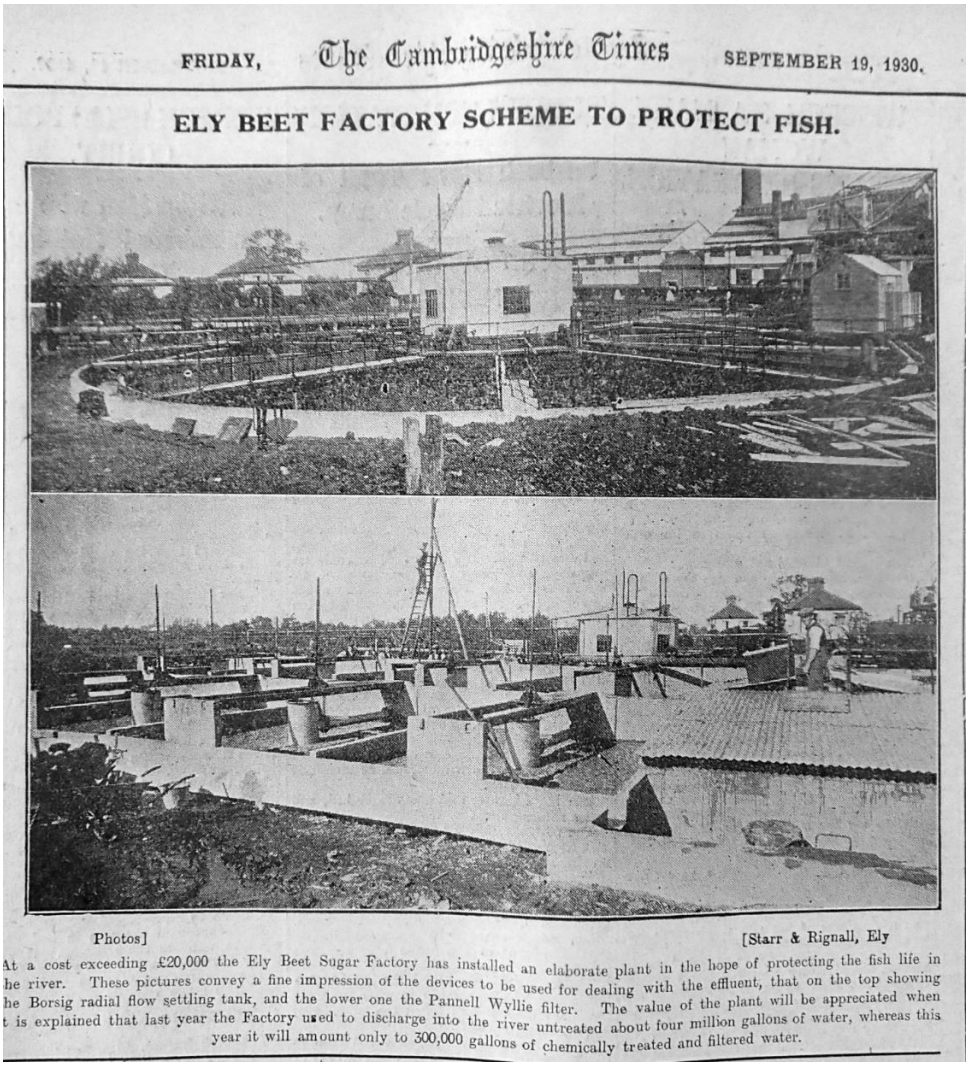
It is unsafe to predict what would be likely to happen under conditions similar to those of 1929, but there are good grounds for believing that the improvements in the factory systems would prevent a recurrence of the wholesale destruction of that year.

However, while extreme optimism may not be warranted, there appears to be no need for undue pessimism. The fisheries below the Ely Beet-Sugar Factory have definitely improved during the last two years, as plenty of anglers will testify.

If, in due course, these waters regain their former reputation, the Board will be entitled to some of the credit, as also will Mr. Charles T Nicholls, who so courageously fought and won his High Court action against the Ely Beet-Sugar Factory.

And we must acknowledge the benefit of what has been done so far, by the improved factory systems.

Photographs, and a description of the new Filtration System below.



FRIDAY, The Cambridgeshire Times SEPTEMBER 19, 1930.

ELY BEET FACTORY SCHEME TO PROTECT FISH.

Photos] [Starr & Rignall, Ely

At a cost exceeding £20,000 the Ely Beet Sugar Factory has installed an elaborate plant in the hope of protecting the fish life in he river. These pictures convey a fine impression of the devices to be used for dealing with the effluent, that on the top showing he Borsig radial flow settling tank, and the lower one the Pannell Wyllie filter. The value of the plant will be appreciated when t is explained that last year the Factory used to discharge into the river untreated about four million gallons of water, whereas this year it will amount only to 300,000 gallons of chemically treated and filtered water.

Photographs above from: The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 19th, 1930.

The description accompanying the photograph reads as follows:

At a cost exceeding £20,000, the Ely Beet Sugar Factory has installed an elaborate plant in the hope of protecting the fish life in the river. These pictures convey a fine impression of the devices to be used for dealing with the effluent, that on the top showing the Borsig radial flow settling tank, and the lower one the Pannell Wyllie filter. The value of the plant will be appreciated when it is explained that last year, the factory used to discharge into the river untreated, about 4,000,000 gallons of water, whereas this year it will amount only to 300,000 gallons of chemically treated and filtered water.

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The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

Growers Committee.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, July the 29th, 1932.

In accordance with Clauses 12 and 13, of the Ely Beet Sugar Factories Beet contract for 1932, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the undermentioned growers have kindly consented to stand as the factory's nominees for the Growers Committee. Each area group below specified shall be entitled to elect one member by ballot, and the five gentlemen thus elected will form the Growers Committee.

Area Group number 1. (Inspection Agent, Mr. R N Barwell), and Factory Nominations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Cross, Samuel: | Highflyer Hall, New Barnes, Ely: |
| Martin, Heber G: | Highfield House, Littleport: |
| Parish, Bertram: | Stretham near Ely: |
| Pearson, Henry: | Plains Farms, Littleport: |
| Ward, William F: | Needham's Farm, Witchford, Ely: |

Area Group number 2. (Inspection Agent, Mr. C C Hore), and Factory Nominations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Easey, D H: | Landbeach, Cambs: |
| Norman, Arthur: | Worts Farm, Landbeach, Cambs: |
| Pearson, Bertram: | Trinity Hall farm, Milton: |
| Randall A J: | Barway, near Ely: |
| Yarrow, Arthur: | Vicarage Farm, Swaffham Prior: |

Area Group number 3. (Inspection Agent, Mr. F. Sergeant), and Factory Nominations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bellamy, W: | Park House, Wimblington: |
| Heading, Alfred: | Belmont, Chatteris: |
| Newton, Bertram: | Fairfield Bury, Saint Ives: |
| Richardson, Stuart: | The Shrubbery, Chatteris: |
| Wright, A G: | The Hermitage Farm, Earith: |

Area Group number 4. (Inspection Agent, Mr. E J Neville), and Factory Nominations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Billups A W: | Allandale, March: |
| Dalton R W: | Welney near Wisbech: |
| Game, Walter: | Chatteris: |
| Warner, S F L: | Whittington, Stoke Ferry: |
| West, Bernard H: | Christchurch: |

Area Group number 5. (Inspection Agent, Mr. R Seth), and Factory Nominations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Brown, J W: | Poplar Farm, Burnt Fen: |
| Collen, Robert: | Bargate Farm, West Row: |
| Pearson, T: | Wisteria House, Mepal: |
| Seager, F G: | The Plough and Duck, Burnt Fen: |
| Steward, F J: | Cupola Farm, Undley, Lakenheath: |

Growers of the Ely factory, are notified of their right to add to the above nominations, by submitting to the factory, not more than one name in writing, within seven days of this date. Voting papers will be in the hands of growers, on or before, the 1st of September, 1932.

A grower can establish his group from the Factory Agent's name above-mentioned.

THE ELY BEET SUGAR FACTORY, LIMITED.
29th July, 1932.

The original Public Notice below:

**THE ELY BEET SUGAR FACTORY, LTD.**

**GROWERS' COMMITTEE.**

IN accordance with Clauses 12 and 13 of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory's Beet Contract for 1932, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undermentioned growers have kindly consented to stand as the Factory's nominees for the Growers' Committee. Each area-group below specified shall be entitled to elect one member by ballot, and the five gentlemen thus elected will form the Growers' Committee.

| Area-Group No:— | | Factory Nominations. |
|---|---|---|
| 1. (Inspection Agent, Mr. R. N. Barwell). | Cross, Samuel | Highflyer Hall, New Barnes, Ely. |
| | Martin, Heber G. | Highfield House, Littleport. |
| | Parish, Bertram | Stretham, near Ely. |
| | Pearson, Henry | Plains Farms, Littleport. |
| | Ward, William. F. | Needhams Farm, Witchford, Ely |
| 2. (Inspection Agent, Mr. C. C. Hore). | Easey, D. H. | Landbeach, Cambs. |
| | Norman, Arthur | Worts Farm, Landbeach, Cambs. |
| | Pearson, Bertram | Trinity Hall Farm, Milton. |
| | Randall, A. J. | Barway, near Ely. |
| | Yarrow, Arthur | Vicarage Farm, Swaffham Prior. |
| 3. (Inspection Agent, Mr. F. Sarjeant). | Bellamy, W. | Park House, Wimblington. |
| | Heading, Alfred | Belmont, Chatteris. |
| | Newton, Bertram | Fairfield Bury, St. Ives. |
| | Richardson, Stuart | The Shrubbery, Chatteris. |
| | Wright, A. G. | The Hermitage Farm, Earith. |
| 4. (Inspection Agent, Mr. E. J. Neville). | Billups, A. W. | Allandale, March. |
| | Dalton, R. W. | Welney, near Wisbech. |
| | Game, Walter | Chatteris. |
| | Warner, S. F. L. | Whittington, Stoke Ferry. |
| | West, Bernard. H. | Christchurch. |
| 5. (Inspection Agent, Mr. R. Seth). | Brown, J. W. | Poplar Farm, Burnt Fen. |
| | Collen, Robert | Bargate Farm, West Row. |
| | Pearson, T. | Wisteria House, Mepal. |
| | Seager, F. G. | The Plough & Duck, Burnt Fen. |
| | Steward, F. J. | Cupola Farm, Undley, Lakenheath. |

Growers of the Ely Factory are notified of their right to add to the above nominations by submitting to the Factory not more than one name in writing within seven days of this date.

Voting papers will be in the hands of growers on or before the 1st September, 1932.

A grower can establish his group from the Factory Agent's name above-mentioned.

**THE ELY BEET SUGAR FACTORY, LIMITED.**

29th July, 1932.

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Sugar Factory’s Appeal.

Successful Objection to Ely Assessment.

Heavy Expenditure.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, September the 9th, 1932.

A proposal to increase the assessment of Ely Beet Sugar Factory by £750 was strongly opposed at Ely on Tuesday when a meeting of the Isle of Ely Assessment Committee was held. The appeal against the new assessment was based upon the grounds that the director's had been forced to spend large sums of money on improvements which, instead of increasing the Factory's output, had lessened it.

The meeting took place in the Shire Hall, and was presided over by Mr. H J Martin, the other members present being Mr. F G Roseberry, the Reverent S S Walton, Messrs. F Tucker, A C Leeding, J S Fendick, J W Merrywest, M Wilson. F K Ogden, H D Collingwood, and W Wallace, with the clerk, (Mr. R W Faircloth).

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, were scheduled on the proposals list as owners and occupiers of a Factory, railway sidings, wharves, dockland, etc., at Turbutsea and Minty Fen, Ely, with an existing assessment of £7,730 net, and £1,937 rateable. The proposed new assessment was £8,500 net, and £2,125 rateable.

The Factory's objections were placed before the committee by Mr. T Brown, who said that he had seen the rating officer, and understood that the new assessment would include lands on the other side of the river, which had been acquired since the Factory representatives were before the committee, in 1929. Since 1929, said Mr. Brown, certain work had had to be done in the Factory, in relation to the purification of the effluent. That had had the effect of altering the whole method of the water supply to the Factory, and the disposal of the effluent. Previously, the water was pumped in from the river, passed through the works, passed out into settling pools and returned to the river.

But since certain things had happened down the river, a very great change had taken place. Now the water had to be divided and the water in which the beet was washed had to be quite separate from the water used in the process of sugar manufacture. This process water had to be taken by an overhead pipe across the river onto land which the Factory had acquired, and such of it as could be dealt with during the campaign was dealt with, and the remainder had to be stored and pumped back across the river and dealt with after the campaign. “This had made a very considerable difference to the output of the Factory,” declared Mr. Brown, “for whereas, when we came before you in 1929, the estimated daily output was 2,500 tons, today it has been reduced to rather less than 2,100 tons, because having to deal with the water, has meant additional machinery and power, and this has had the effect of slowing up the Factory. This is not a very large Factory, and today it is not worth the estimated rent of 1929 on that account.

The Reverent S S Walton: What is the cost of the additions that you have made? Mr. Brown: The capital cost has been something over £20,000 for land, machinery and the big settling pool of 42 acres, on the other side of the river.
Mr Fendick: And what is the additional charge on production?
Mr. Brown: This year, the additional cost is estimated at from £1,500 to £2,000. It is not only a charge during the campaign, but it has to go on for many weeks after the campaign is over. When the campaign is over, the pool is full, and 50,000,000 gallons have to be dealt with. This

is the equivalent of the sewage of a town of 5,000 inhabitants for a whole year. It cost about £1,547 for labour and material last year.

Mr Roseberry asked whether any other factories had had to undertake similar work.
Mr. Brown replied that the Lynn Factory was not faced with the same difficulty, because the effluent could be discharged straight into tidal waters. At Peterborough, it had only been necessary to put in filter beds.

Continuing, Mr. Brown said, “We have also built a new sugar store, and that we have to tell you about. it is a store for 100,000 bags, equivalent to 10,000 tons, and it has cost £8,000.
This store, is of course, an additional capital asset of the Factory, but it was an expenditure forced unwillingly upon the directors by the exigencies of the trade, in order to spread the sugar sales more evenly over the year.

Mr Walton: Your business has increased, so that you have had to increase this accommodation?

Mr. Brown: Oh, no. It is to save us being forced to put our sugar on the market, and to enable us to spread the sales more evenly. As a matter of fact, our output is 20 percent down. We have dealt with 3,000 tons a day, but now we feel we cannot deal with more than 2,200 to 2,300 tons.

Mr Walton: Are the profits of the Factory less?

Mr. Brown: Yes, of course, much less.

The rating officer, (Mr. Clarke), was asked how the assessment had been arrived at.
Mr. Clarke: The only basis we had to work upon was the Inland Revenue Assessment of £8,480, to which we only add £20.

Mr. Brown maintained that what the committee had to consider was, what was a fair rent anyone coming there would pay? “I venture to suggest that £7,750 is the most a man would pay for a Factory like this, where the whole business is dependent on a government subsidy,” said Mr. Brown.

“I must beg that you will not be swayed by the £8,480 put down for Schedule A. As a matter of fact, it is not worth so much rent now, because the productive capacity is less and the equivalent of the sewage of a town of 5,000 inhabitants has to be dealt with, without a penny being added to the value of the assessment.”

The Committee considered in private the objections to the proposed new assessment, and when the Factory representatives were again summoned before them.

The Chairman announced that they had given very careful consideration to the fact that the Factory had had to spend a large amount of money to provide for the treatment of the effluent without their getting any benefit back, and they had decided that the present assessment should stand.

In acknowledging the reception, the committee had given the Factory’s appeal, Mr. Brown said he hoped the good relations which had always existed between the committee and the Factory would continue, and that the Factory would be a great benefit to the district in the future.

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The Sugar Beet Season.

Ely Factory to start on Monday.

Longer Campaign Anticipated.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 30th, 1932.

The now familiar spectacle of huge loads of beet being conveyed through the streets of Ely to the Sugar Beet Factory at Adelaide is once again with us. Monday saw the first of the deliveries and since then there has been a constant procession of traffic on all roads leading to the Factory.

From the point of view of weight, the crop is definitely much better than it was a year ago, especially when anticipations of three months ago are taken into consideration.

With deliveries reaching the Factory in their present satisfactory manner, –and it is hoped that this will continue, –a start with cutting will be made on Monday next.

Employment will be found for much the same number of men as were engaged a year ago at the Factory, which not only anticipates a longer campaign than that of last year, but to working at full capacity. As far as at present known, the season will not close until early in the new year, by which time it is hoped to have completed the whole of the cutting.

The interior of this massive factory presents a remarkably animated appearance. Amid a mass of enormous machinery, men are actively engaged in making the usual tests, and with satisfactory results.

Outside, the great flumes into which the beet is received, are already showing signs of the work done in the fields. Gradually, the flumes are filling up, and with this influx of the products of the soil, everything should be in a state of preparedness for the start on Monday of what is hoped to be a highly successful campaign.

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Sugar Factory Closed.

The Nottingham Journal, Saturday, October the 8th, 1932.

Having failed to get a sufficient tonnage from growers of beet on the contract offered for this season's crops, the Newark sugar factory, which should now be in full operation, is closed.

The English Beet Sugar Corporation Limited, however, intend to reopen the factory for the season in 1933. The growers are being offered the same contract as the other factories in the group, Cantley, Ely, Ipswich and King's Lynn, where it is already in operation for the present crop.

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Round the Farm.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, October the 14th, 1932.

Farmers are pushing on with beet deliveries under permits, although the sugar content is not yet at its best. Up to the present, sugar-content is on the low side, but it is said to be improving at the rate of 1 percent, per week, so that there is something to be said for those who are not making a beginning until towards the end of the month.

An expert at the Ely Sugar factory, states that, after a really bad start, the beet crops generally have made a good recovery, and the average tonnage per acre will probably show an increase on the 1931 return.

The Ely factory draws nearly all its supply from within a 25-mile radius, as several other factories are not far away, and present prospects point to a quicker early delivery than was the case in 1931. The factory's own fleet of 94 specially-constructed barges, and seven tugs soon will be in full commission.

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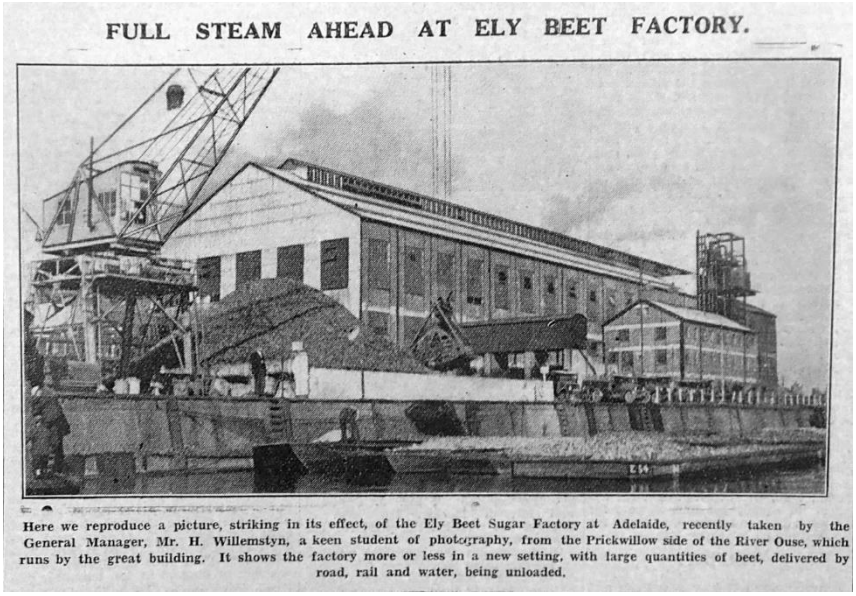
Full Steam Ahead at Ely Beet Factory.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, November the 4th, 1932.

Photograph below and caption.


FULL STEAM AHEAD AT ELY BEET FACTORY.

Here we reproduce a picture, striking in its effect, of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory at Adelaide, recently taken by the General Manager, Mr. H. Willemstyn, a keen student of photography, from the Prickwillow side of the River Ouse, which runs by the great building. It shows the factory more or less in a new setting, with large quantities of beet, delivered by road, rail and water, being unloaded.

Caption reads: Here we produce a picture, striking in its effect, of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory at Adelaide, recently taken by the General Manager, Mr H Willemstyn, a keen student of photography from the Prickwillow side of the River Ouse, which runs by the great building. It shows the factory more or less in a new setting, with large quantities of beet, delivered by road rail and water, being unloaded.

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Beet Campaign Ends.

Ely Factory closed until October.

A satisfactory season.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, January the 13th, 1933.

Another sugar beet campaign has come to a close and by the cessation of activities at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory this week, some 400 men have been added temporarily to the role of the unemployed in the Ely district.

Taking all things into consideration, the season has been a good one, both from the point of view of the growers and of the Factory. The campaign opened on September the 26th, and from that date large deliveries of beet were daily made by road rail and river, the last three months of the year finding the Factory in its usual state of constant activity.

Cutting commenced on October the 4th; from which time the machinery was busily at work for 13 weeks. At the peak period there were 550 men employed at the Factory, but with the waning of the campaign this number was systematically reduced, until to-day there is just the normal general staff of about 140, who will carry on until the opening of the next campaign in October.

A good season.

Visiting the factory yesterday, (Thursday), a representative of this journal was told by a prominent official there that the past season had been a good one from all points of view. The campaign, though longer than last year's, had been a normal one.

During the three months, no fewer than 214,000 tons of beet had passed through the factory, compared with last year's total of 158,000 tons. “The weather,” he told our representative, “Was very favourable for the lifting and there was not sufficient frost to harm the beet.

At the start of the season, the sugar content was distinctly poor, but it quickly went up and remained high for the rest of the campaign, there being no appreciable sign of it going down, even when we finish receiving deliveries. As for next season's campaign, we are quite satisfied with regard to the acreage we shall require.”

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Sugar Beet Seed.

Varieties likely to give best results.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, January the 27th, 1933.

It is important for farmers to know the varieties of seed which will pay them best, and the trials carried out by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany during the past eight years show that some varieties are nearly 20 percent better than others.

Most farmers now know that there are three main types of seed, the E, or heavy yielding group, the Z, or high sugar-content group, and the N, or normal group, which falls between the other two. There is no hard and fast dividing line between these types, but broadly speaking, the best paying varieties in this country belonged to the E and N groups.

For general cultivation, Kleinwanzleben E, Kleinwanzleben N, Dobrovice Dippe E, Marsters, Johnson's Perfection, Kuhn P, Hoerning H S., Hoerning R R., Zapotil 1, Zapotil 2 and Strube E can also be recommended. For early lifting, Marsters is probably the most suitable, with Dobrovice as an alternative.

Even under these conditions, however, the other stocks mentioned for general cultivation are likely to give good results.

For the earlier sowings, the risk of bolting has to be considered. On the average, Marsters has bolted less than any other variety, and until the last year or two, Johnsons Perfection and Khun P were nearly as good; but in a trial in 1932, all these bolted more than the three Kleinwanzleben strains E, N and Z, against which they were being tested.

Nevertheless, no better advice can at present be given than to choose Marsters for the early sowings.

On the richest soils, the tops are apt to grow inconveniently big. In trials carried out in the fence by the NIAB Marsters, which has the smallest top of the varieties tested, and Kleinwanzleben E have given the best results;

After them come Kleinwanzleben N and Z, and then Johnson's Perfection, and Khun P. The last two have larger tops then Marsters, but smaller ones than the Kleinwanzleben stocks.

All these varieties are ultimately of Continental origin, and much of the seed used here is grown abroad.

Trials have, however, shown that English seed of these varieties, provided it is properly grown and is harvested under good conditions, gives just as good results as foreign grown seed.

Points of this description and fuller particulars of the leading varieties are dealt with in a leaflet, which is free of charge from County Agricultural Organisers, or directly from the National Institute of Agricultural Botany.

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Beet Sugar Development.

The Western & South Wales News, Friday, February the 24th, 1933.

Rumour has been busy, suggesting important developments in the sugar refining industry, the idea being that negotiations were in progress to end uneconomic competition between refining and home-grown beet sugar interests.

Now it is announced that Mister Albert Palash, a director of Helbert, Wagg and Company, has been appointed to the boards of the English Beet Sugar Corporation and the Ely, Ipswich and King's Lynn Beet Sugar Factories.

This indicates closer cooperation between the English beet sugar growers, and provides a possible explanation of the rapid rise in the shares of Tate and Lyle, the refiners who use large quantities of beet sugar.

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Sugar Beet Industry's Future.

Earl de la Warr's reassuring statement.

A Record Year Last Year.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, May the 5th, 1933.

Striking figures indicative of the progress of the beet sugar industry in Great Britain, were given at the annual meeting of the British Sugar Beet Society at the Victoria Hotel, Northumberland-Avenue, London, on Friday. Colonel E Royds was in the chair.

The annual report, presented by the Chairman, made significant reference to the stabilising of agricultural production.

It proceeded: "Urban opinion appears at last to have awakened to the value of agriculture to manufacturing industry, and, to the fact that the better off the countryside is, the more there is to spend in the towns, so the Government of the day has been in a favourable position to carry beneficial legislation, and with a capable and sympathetic Minister of Agriculture and Chancellor of the Exchequer, this long-suffering part of the community may recover some of its ancient prosperity.

The Wheat quota is one step which has had results out of all proportion to its rather small monetary benefit, and if a suitable scheme is applied to barley, and stability given to sugar beet, the position will be better than it has been for very many years.

In the campaign now completed, seventeen factories have been engaged, manufacturing the produce, (about 2,245,000 tons), from 255,600 acres, yielding about 6,610,000 hundred weights of sugar.

Although development of the industry has been satisfactory, particularly in view of the continued depressed sugar markets yet not more than one-fifth of our home consumption was produced, so that alleged injurious competition with other sources of supply cannot be sustained.

Moving the adoption of the report, the chairman said the acreage of sugar beet being grown this year is about 340,000 acres, and approximately the same as in 1930. It is about 90,000 acres in excess of the area under cultivation in 1931. The yield for 1932 was 8.8 as against 7.1 tons for 1931.

On the other hand, the sugar content showed a slight decrease, being 16.9 compared with 17.4 in 1931. But the net result for 1932 has been that the sugar per acre produced was 3,130lb., as against 2,750lb for 1931. This average yield of sugar constitutes a record.

Remarking that they were nearing the close of the ten years period of the Subsidy Act, Colonel Royds said a great deal of anxiety existed as to what would happen when the subsidy expired.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said last year that in no circumstances would the sugar beet industry be let down, and since then, they had been waiting for the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry to which the Chancellor referred, the result of which, it was expected, would mean a continuance of adequate assistance to maintain it on healthy lines.

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One and a Half Million.

Paid to Farmers for Sugar Beet.

The Newmarket Journal & Free Press, Saturday, June the 24th, 1933.

Reports of four beet sugar companies issued, show that in the year ended, March the 31st last, over £1,500,000 were paid over to farmers for supplies.

The figures are as follows: -- Ely Beet Sugar Factory, £400,650, Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, £250,068, Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, £308,991, English Beet Sugar Corporation, (Kelham), £596,517, Total £1,556,226.

The average payments per ton were: Ely 37 shillings and 5 pence., Ipswich 41 shillings and 1 penny., Kings Lynn 39 shillings and 9 pence., Kelham 42 shillings and 8 pence.

Ely shows a balance of a net profit of £45,000, with a ten percent tax-free dividend. Ipswich a balance of net profit of £24,000, with a tax-free dividend of six percent., Kings Lynn a balance of net profit of £13,500, with a three percent tax-free dividend, and English Beet Sugar, balance of net profit £50,000, and tax-free dividend of ten percent.

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Sugar Marketing Scheme.

Provisions of New Draft Plan.

Penalty Power.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, February the 16th, 1934.

Plans for the proposed regulation of the marketing of sugar produced in Great Britain, are disclosed in the draft scheme, which has now been submitted to the Minister of Agriculture.

The scheme is known as the Sugar Marketing Scheme, 1934, and its promoters include the Central Sugar Company, Limited, The Yorkshire Sugar Company, Limited, both of Woodston, Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, and Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, of Bardney.

According to the draft scheme, the suggested Sugar Marketing Board shall keep a register of producers, and on application made by any producer to the Board, that producer, if he manufactures sugar from beet grown in Great Britain, whether or not he also refines sugar, shall be entitled to be registered as a manufacturer, or if he does not manufacture sugar, shall be entitled to be registered as a refiner. There shall be exempt from registration, producers of such classes, or descriptions, as may be determined by the Board.

Constitution of the Board.

Until the end of January, 1935, the Board shall consist of 11 manufacturers' representatives and 11 refiners' representatives, and two persons nominated by the Minister of Agriculture, and after the end of next January, it shall be composed of 22 persons annually, elected by registered producers, and two persons annually co-opted to the Board, by the elected members.

An executive committee will be appointed of seven people, three of them manufacturers' representatives, and three refiners' representatives, with one member of the Board, who has been nominated by the Minister, or co-opted to the Board.

On the coming into force of the scheme, a poll of the registered producers shall be taken on the question of whether this scheme is to remain in operation, and the producers entitled to vote, shall be those registered on the qualifying date. For the purposes of the poll, the quantity of sugar which a registered producer is capable of producing, shall be determined by reference to the total quantity of sugar produced, whether by the registered producers, or, by any other person, during the period of three years, immediately preceding the year of the qualifying date.

Marketing Provisions.

The marketing provisions of the scheme will come into force at the expiration of a suspensory period of one month, beginning on the date on which the result of the poll is declared to be favourable to continuance of the scheme.

Subject to provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Act, 1931, with respect to existing contracts, and subject to certain provisions of the scheme, a registered producer shall not, during any quota period, sell any refined sugar, either in Great Britain or elsewhere, unless a quota for that period has been determined in his case, and if a quota for any period has been determined in his case, he shall not during that period sell any quantity of refined sugar in excess of the quota. Nor shall he sell any refined sugar otherwise than under a certain contract.

Penalty up to £500.

If a registered producer sells any refined sugar in contravention of this provision, the Board shall impose a penalty not exceeding £500, plus half the price for which the sugar was sold by him.

Quotas shall be determined by the Board for the year beginning September the 30th, 1934, and for each subsequent year.

The method of determining quotas shall be such as may be prescribed by the Board, but so that the quotas of each registered producer shall be determined by reference to his qualifying tonnage. That tonnage is the aggregate of the number of tons of sugar sold during the period January 1st, 1930, to December 31st, 1932, all sales of sugar for consumption outside the United Kingdom being disregarded.

The time at which the quotas for any year are determined by the Board, shall be not later than one month before the beginning of that year. There is also a provision for reducing the quota of a producer in any succeeding year, if the total quantity of refined sugar sold by him during a year, exceeds the determined quota.

Expenses of the Board.

Whenever considered necessary for the operation of the scheme, the Board may require producers to pay a contribution towards the expenses of the Board, subject to certain conditions.

Until the Board have appointed a secretary, Mr Alfred Wood, FCA. of Inveresk House, Strand, London, will act in this capacity. Objections and representations respecting the scheme must be made not later than March the 24th.

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Beet Contracts Refused.

At Ely, ----Not at Peterborough!

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, February the 23rd, 1934.

Consternation has been caused in farming circles, and particularly among small holders in the Isle of Ely, by reason of the fact that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, when considering applications for contracts for next season's beet, have, in cases of growers whose crops have been of low sugar content, either considerably reduced the acreage, or refused the applications.

The “Standard” has made inquiries whether any similar action has been taken by the Peterborough factory. Local members of the National Farmers Union have heard nothing of the kind, and do not suppose it is probable, in as much, as the sugar content here has been of a good average. It was not quite so good this winter as in the previous campaign, but was satisfactory. Information was not available at the factory at Woodston as Mr. Glen Mowbray is unfortunately absent through indisposition and confined to bed.

In response to inquiries in the district, we gather that the action at Ely is possibly due to the fact that some offers to grow have been received from people who farm land quite unsuitable for sugar beet, and from whom it would be unfair to accept a crop.

The Good Grower.

An investigation of the local situation by a representative of the “Cambridgeshire Times” goes to show that the Ely factory's action has affected in some instances, those who have been growing beet for the factory ever since it was built, but the factory’s explanation of this change in the method of considering contracts, is that it would be of benefit to those whose crops have been of good quality, it being contended that those growers have formally had to subsidise those whose crops have been of a low sugar content.

“We have received,” says the writer, “a number of complaints from growers, who state that this late alteration of policy on the part of the factory authorities, has meant that they have been forced to seek last minute contracts with other factories, with the inevitable increase in transport charges, and the consequent decrease of profits, or that they have had to consider the possibility of sowing the land already prepared, with seeds for other crops.

There again, however, they have been faced with an insuperable difficulty, so far as potatoes are concerned, for under the Potato Marketing Scheme, farmers are restricted as to the acreage of that crop they're allowed to grow, with the result that many agriculturalists and particularly the small holders section, are in a quandary as to how best to utilise land they had intended to plant with sugar beet.”

The Factory Statement.

A representative of the same journal interviewed Mr. E R Blount at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and in reply to the questions put to him regarding the factory's position in the matter, Mr. Blount said, “The factory has received applications for acreages of beet largely in excess of the maximum quantity it can accept, and consequently the surplus amounts over its requirements have had to be refused. During the past three years, acreage has been offered in excess each year, and those applicants who have not grown for the factory in the past, have, therefore, had their contracts refused.

“Hitherto, under the participating contracts, those farmers who have supplied the factory with beet of low sugar content, have been subsidised by other growers who have sent in beet of good quality. In order to obviate that, a new principle has been introduced this year, whereby,

in order to cater for those growers whose applications have been refused during the last two or three years, those who have been supplying the factory with very poor-quality beet in the past, have either had their acreage considerably reduced, or have been refused a contract. This step has been taken in fairness to the vast majority of the growers who supply the factory with beet of reasonable quality. The factory has had many applications from growers who, in the first instance, had been refused contracts, and, wherever it has been reasonably possible, a certain acreage has been granted."

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Getting the Sweet from the Beet.

How Sugar Bowl Plot Affects You.

Profits for Foreigners.

"Reynolds" Special Commissioner.

Reynolds Illustrated News, Sunday, May the 20th, 1934.

The ten years' Beet Sugar Subsidy has cost the nation £40 million. It has been extended for another year, –still at the nation's expense, –to enable sugar interests, with the aid of the Cabinet, to put through a Sugar Bowl Plot.

The plot is to transfer the burden of maintaining this "hothouse" industry from the taxpayer to the consumer.

It will cost consumers £46 million in the next ten years. It will create, with Government sanction, a Sugar Monopoly, having power to place a levy of one farthing on every pound of the two million tons of sugar Great Britain consumes every year. All in the interests of a private industry, controlled to a considerable extent, by foreign investors!

Trail of Distress.

Let us get some of the essential facts quite straight before we proceed to examine how much of the sweet in the beet has gone abroad.

The subsidy of £40 million has been spent to foster an infant industry and create work. For three months in every year, the beet sugar business has, on the average, employed 7,130 persons. Throughout the whole twelve months of the average year, it has employed less than 1,800 persons, –and it has caused unemployment in the old established sugar refineries of Greenock, put many seamen formerly employed in the transport of sugar from overseas, "on the beach," and caused such distress in our sugar-producing Crown Colonies, that the British taxpayer has had to fork out hundreds of thousands of pounds in relief loans!

The total capital invested in the beet sugar factories is estimated at £4,500,000. The Treasury put up £2,215,000 in guarantees under the Trade Facilities Acts, to build these factories. Only one-third of the money has been paid back. Then, out of the Treasury, there has flowed into the industry, an average annual sum of £4,000,000 in subsidy, and rebate of duties, –an annual dole equivalent to 88 percent of the total capital invested in the industry!

The subsidy has been equal to £1 per hundredweight of beet sugar produced, –four times the economic price of the sugar. Put another way, it has been equal to 25 shillings per day for every man employed, –although the wages paid have rarely exceeded £2 a week.

Now let us see where the foreign investors come in.

Dutch interests dominate the English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited., Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, and Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

The English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited., has a share capital of £500,000. Against the names of four Dutch shareholders, there stands £347,000. Among the few, – the very few, – substantial British shareholders are the Prudential Assurance Company, Limited, (£85,000), and nominees of Barclays Bank, (£6,500).

No less than £450,000 is sunk in the Kings Lynn Factory, English Beet holds £50,000 of that; of the remaining £400,000, at least £224,000 is held by Dutch companies.

Of the Ely factory's £450,000, English Beet hold a trifle of £8,700; but other Dutch interests hold at least £260,000. (Midland Bank (Overseas) Nominees, Limited, appear here with £8,000.)

At Ipswich, English Beet holds £30,700, out of £400,000 shares. Dutch interests hold at least £240,000 of the remainder.

All these figures are based on their latest returns filed at Somerset House. They suggest that of the Beet Sugar Industries £4,500,000, not less than £1,800,000, forty percent, is held by Dutch dominated companies, quite apart from English Beets substantial holdings in other, "All British" factories.

## And their Profits.

If these companies have obtained 40 percent of the subsidy, their share in the last 10 years has been £16,000,000! And their profits? I quote the "Investors Review" (13th February,1932).

Here is the approximate financial record of…the English, the Ely, the Ipswich, and the Kings Lynn sugar factories, for the six years ended March 31st, 1931: --

| | |
|---|---|
| Total earning, (after income tax) -- | £3,455,000. |
| Allocated as follows: -- | |
| Depreciation written off---- | £1,192,000. |
| Placed to reserve---- | £960,000. |
| Dividends paid---- | £1,303,000. |
| which equals the above amount of | £3,455,000. |

"These stupendous profits have been earned in six years on a combined capital of £1,800,000. Naturally, the financial position is now enormously strong," Naturally!

Sweet in the beet! Yes, but not for you and me.

We have allowed successive Governments to shout the slogan, "Why pay the Empire 5 shillings per hundredweight for sugar, when we can pay Dutchman and others 20 shillings to produce it here!" We have allowed them to act on the slogan. We have paid the bill!

And if the Sugar Bowl Plot is permitted to develop, we will go on paying, –for somebody else's sweet in the beet!

An adjacent photograph of Mr. W Leonard, Member of Parliament, a vigorous Parliamentary critic of the Beet Sugar Subsidy.

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‘Politicians’ Part in Grave Scandal.

“Staging” Public Inquiries.

A Marketing Masquerade.

By the Right Honourable, A V Alexander.

(Secretary of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Congress, and the First Lord of the Admiralty in the Labour Government)

The Supplement to Reynolds’s, Sunday, November the 11th, 1934.

The story of the present position of the Sugar Industry in this country reveals one of the greatest ramps in history.

We are often told in the Cooperative Movement, that we ought not to be engaged in political defence, that business and politics will not mix, and so on. Here is a case which shows clearly how Parliament and legislation are exploited for private profit at the expense of the community; a case which proves conclusively, how essential it is for consumers to combine for political defence.

The cold facts speak for themselves. The position of the Sugar Industry today arises directly from the attempt to grow Sugar Beet in this country. This dates from about the year 1912, when the first sugar beet factory was built at Cantley, mainly with Dutch capital. In 1917, a second factory was initiated at Kelham, with the aid of a loan from the Government, but did not commence work until 1921.

From September, 1919, the Beet Sugar Industry was subsidised by a remission of six shillings, two and two third pennies per hundredweight, of the Excise Duty, from July 1922, by a remission of the whole of the Excise Duty of 25 shillings per hundredweight., and from April, 1924, to July 1925, 11, shillings and 8 pence per hundredweight.

Ten Years of it.

In 1925, the British Sugar, (Subsidy) Act, was passed, under which, in place of remission of Excise Duties, the Government undertook to pay a ten years subsidy of nineteen shillings and six pence per hundredweight on all British Beet Sugar for four years, thirteen shillings per

hundredweight for the next three years, and six shillings and six pence per hundredweight for the last three years. In addition, corresponding rates of subsidy were paid on molasses, varying from twelve shillings and four pence per hundredweight, to four shillings and threepence, in the first four years, eight shillings and threepence, to two shillings, ten and a half pence in the next three years, and four shillings, one and a half pence to one shilling and five pence in the last three years. Further, home grown sugar received a remission of duty of four shillings and three pence per hundredweight in 1925 to 1927, and five shillings ten pence per hundredweight from 1927, up to the present.

Put in another way, the remission of duty and direct subsidy resulted in assistance to British grown sugar, excluding fluctuating subsidies on molasses, as follows: --

| | |
|---|---|
| 1922-24 | £1 five shillings and eight pence per hundredweight |
| 1924-25 | £1 three shillings and eight pence per hundredweight |
| 1925-28 | £1 and six shillings per hundredweight |
| 1928-31 | £1 and four pence per hundredweight |
| 1931-34 | Thirteen shillings and one penny per hundredweight |

During practically the whole of this period, the State assistance has amounted to over 100 percent of the c.i.f., (Cost, Insurance and Freight), value of imported sugar.

It has been stated, the subsidy was to help a young industry in its early years, yet it was known that the production of sugar from beet was uneconomic in every country in the world, in competition with cane sugar. So enormous was this subsidy, that in ten years it amounted to over £42,000,000.

The actual market value of the beet sugar produced in this country in 1933 was approximately £2,900,000. The total Government assistance for producing that sugar was £6,000,000.

## Using Public Funds.

Sir Herbert Samuel, in the House of Commons on March the 19th, 1934, revealed that for £6,000,000, the agricultural workers engaged in beet cultivation could have been paid £2 per week for doing nothing; The workers employed in the beet sugar factories could have been paid £3 a week for doing nothing; A subsidy of £3 per acre on 366,000 acres could have been paid to the farmers to grow other crops; The beet sugar companies could have been paid 8.8 percent on their capital if they would undertake not to work the factories, –and, after all these payments, there would have been enough left to buy a quantity of sugar to the value of £3,000,000 and distribute it to the population free, charging them only the customs tax!

The use of Parliament and of public funds for this industry, on the record shown above, was in itself a grave scandal.

The events of the past two and a half years, however, reveal an even greater scandal in the use of political and governmental machinery against the public.

The old-established refining section of the industry is a party to the subsidy. But it is only fair to say that they opposed the passage through Parliament of the British Sugar Subsidy Act, and probably only entered into the production of beet sugar to protect themselves against subsidised competition by taking a share of the subsidy. In April, 1932, the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a specific pledge to the effect that there should be an impartial inquiry which would go into the whole matter, and submit a report before the period of subsidy expired.

That pledge was broken.

In March, 1933, the Chancellor announced that the beet sugar and the sugar-refining industries had been conferring with the object of putting agreed proposals to the Government, and that those proposals had been received, and were being examined.

In subsequent speeches in the House of Commons in March last by the Minister of Agriculture, it was made clear that the conferences of the sugar interests, with a view to submitting agreed proposals to the Government, were at the direct request of the Minister himself, he said: “I say quite frankly to the House, that I did my utmost to get the interests together.”

It was then argued that these conferences took time; that it would not be possible for the proposed Committee of Inquiry to meet and report before the end of the subsidy period; and the Government thereupon introduced a Bill to extend the period of subsidy for another year. In presenting that Bill to Parliament, the Minister of Agriculture stated, (March the 6th, 1934), nearly two years after the Chancellor's original pledge, that the Committee of Inquiry would be set up under the Chairmanship of Mr. Wilfred Green, K.C.

It transpired, however, that instead of making a direct inquiry into the subsidy, this Committee was to have in mind changes in the structure of the industry, which would follow upon its reorganisation under the Agricultural Marketing Acts.

## Still Uneconomic.

Within a few days of that announcement, the draft of a scheme under the Agricultural Marketing Acts to deal with the sugar industry was published, with the usual statutory notice for the public inquiry into the scheme. It is quite clear, therefore, that the Government, having promised an impartial inquiry in April, 1932, delayed this for two years, which it occupied in getting together the interests which had enjoyed a ten years subsidy of the magnitude I have already outlined, in order to prepare a new basis under the Marketing Acts for exploiting the public to maintain an uneconomic industry.

When the Scheme drafted under the Agricultural Marketing Acts became public, it was seen that it was an abuse of those Acts, which were designed to set up Marketing Boards elected by the primary producers of British agricultural products. The Sugar Marketing Scheme, on the other hand, set up a Board composed of the representatives of twenty-two companies of refiners and beet sugar manufacturers. Its only object was to set up a monopoly for the manufacture and sale of white or refined sugar.

This was to be done by proposing that all sugar, refined or manufactured in this country was to be sold only by those firms, who were licenced by the Sugar Board, and that these sales were to be governed by a quota based upon past production of the refineries or the factories in a period prior to December, 1932. It fell to my lot to point out that the Scheme therefore, set up a close monopoly for private profit.

This, of course, was a complete departure from Parliamentary traditions for hundreds of years, during which time no trading monopoly has ever been granted by Parliament for private profit, unless public utility conditions were imposed on the monopolists. These conditions have, generally speaking, been (a) a strict limitation of the interest to be paid upon capital, (b) a condition that when profits rise, prices to the consumer must fall, and (c) that there must be compulsion, upon the monopolists to supply.
The proceedings that the Public Inquiry emphasised still further the scandal of the whole position. Council for the promoters of this Scheme, obviously with the full knowledge of the Government Department concerned, showed that, as a result of the expenditure of public funds for ten years, eighteen sugar beet factories were now in existence, and that, together

with the sugar refineries, there was an output capacity of 4 million tons of sugar per annum, whereas the total consumption of this country, including 300,000 tons of export trade, was no more than 2,200,000 tons per annum.

Could there be anything more ludicrous than a subsidy out of public funds, which results in the capitalization of an output of a commodity, double the size of the known consumption?

In view of what had happened in the previous two years, I submitted that the public inquiry into the Sugar Marketing Scheme ought not to proceed until the report of the Wilfred Green Committee had been made available. Of course, it will be obvious why this request was made.

It was clear from the statement in the House of Commons that negotiations had been going on with the Ministry of Agriculture, and as Public Inquiries under the Marketing Acts are for the protection of the community, it was impossible adequately to cross examine the witnesses for the promoters without all the facts being available. My objection was overruled, but as the enquiry proceeded, it became evident that my objection had been well founded.

When the only witness for the promoters were giving evidence, he admitted that the production of sugar beet was uneconomic and would require some assistance. When asked as to what proposals have been made by the industry for assistance in place of the subsidy, the witness answered that he could not say what was included or what was not included.

Question and Answer.

After a long argument as to whether it was permissible to submit the question, the following questions and answers were recorded in the official evidence: --

Mr. Alexander: Did the industry, in their proposals to the Government, include a proposal for a special Act of Parliament which would authorise the Sugar Board to make a levy on sugar?

Witness: I think I should be committing a breach of confidence if I said that they did or they did not.

Mr. Alexander: And would you say the same thing if I asked you if the levy was discussed at 2 shillings, 4 pence per hundredweight?

Witness: I think I should be committing a breach of confidence if I said that they did or they did not.

Mr. Alexander: Of course, my submission is that the public is not sufficiently protected at this stage of the Inquiry into the sugar industry, by reason of the inability to obtain necessary information for the public from the witness.

This inquiry ended on Wednesday, May the 9th. Two months later, the evidence of the promoters of the Sugar Scheme to the Wilfred Green Committee was published in the London "Times" on July the 9th. In that evidence, the suggestion which I had made at the inquiry into the Scheme in the previous May was tacitly admitted.

It is now perfectly clear that as a result of the conversations between the interests in the industry, and between themselves and the Ministry of Agriculture, they propose a complete monopoly in the production and sale of refined sugar, and to make a levy of two shillings and four pence per hundredweight on the consumers of sugar, which will, it is estimated, produced not less than £4,600,000 per annum.

Out of this fund, it is proposed to continue to subsidise the production of beet sugar in this country.

At the end of July, another Marketing Scheme appeared for public inquiry–namely, that was prepared on behalf of the growers of the beet from which the beet sugar is manufactured.

In the original Scheme of the beet growers, they took full powers under the Act of 1931 to manufacture and sell refined sugar. At the opening of the inquiry, it was announced that the United Kingdom Sugar Industry Committee, the promoters of the first Marketing Scheme, were among the objectors to the beet growers Scheme, but they did not appear at the commencement. It transpired that they were engaged in negotiations with the promoters of the Beet Growers Scheme, but with the assistance of the Commissioner who conducted the inquiry, we extracted a statement before the proceedings closed that the objection had been withdrawn and that the promoters of the beet Growers scheme had agreed to delete their powers to manufacture and sell refined sugar, thus securing the monopoly of the promoters of the first Scheme.

I can scarcely believe that even a Parliament, as at present constituted, can be persuaded to approve of such a ramp against the public.

A levy of two shillings, 4 pence per hundredweight on all sugar, involves an increase of at least a farthing per pound in the price of domestic sugar, and will increase the cost of every other food commodity in which sugar is used as an ingredient.

It will, for example, mean an increase of at least a halfpenny per pound on practically all jam and marmalade, and proportionate increases in the cost of chocolate, canned fruits, candied peel, mincemeat, lemon curds and table jellies, boiled sweets, toffees and gums, biscuits and cake, patent medicines, cordials and squashes, confectioners sundries, and condensed milk.

Even this list is not completely comprehensive. It is certain, therefore, that the total extraction from the consumer is, in consequence, likely to be nearer £6,000,000 per annum than £4,600,000.

## At Your Cost.

The proposals are all the more to be condemned when one remembers the financial position of a large part of the interests concerned in the monopoly.

Many of the beet factories erected out of Government subsidy have amassed reserves and depreciation sufficient to wipe out the whole of their capital, in addition to paying substantial dividends. The main section of the sugar refiners, who themselves are also interested in a certain section of beet manufacturer, show an extraordinarily strong financial position.

Their last dividend was at the rate of twenty-two and a half percent, free of tax and their one-pound shares stand on the market at a hundred and one shillings, three pence.

To approve of the creation of a monopoly which would have the effect of maintaining profits of this character at the expense of an additional tax on a food of the utmost importance to the working-class consumers in this country, including old age pensioners, widowed pensioners and children, would surely be nothing short of a public scandal, and it is to be hoped that Parliament may even yet prevent a gross misuse of the Agricultural Marketing Acts in this way.

In the light of the experience which has already accrued in the administration of the Marketing Acts under the present Government regime, the tendency to set up monopolies for

private profit in respect of secondary products derived from agricultural products, imported as well as British, makes it essential to press for the amendment of the Acts and the reconstitution of the Marketing Boards, so that these shall not consist entirely of producers, but shall be representative also of the interests of the general consuming community.

Below are photographs of Mr. A.V. Alexander, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Elliot.

RT. HON. A. V. ALEXANDER.
Mr. Chamberlain broke his pledge of a full inquiry.
Mr. Elliot has consistently used Governmental machinery against the consumer

Empire-Breakers.

Sugar, …the United Kingdom assumes the mantle discarded by Germany thirty years ago with the old bounty system so ruinous to the British refiners and West Indian Colonies.

The policy of the Government in this respect adds materially to the distress caused by low (sugar-cane) prices in many parts of the world, and incidentally, is damaging both Colonies and Dominions.

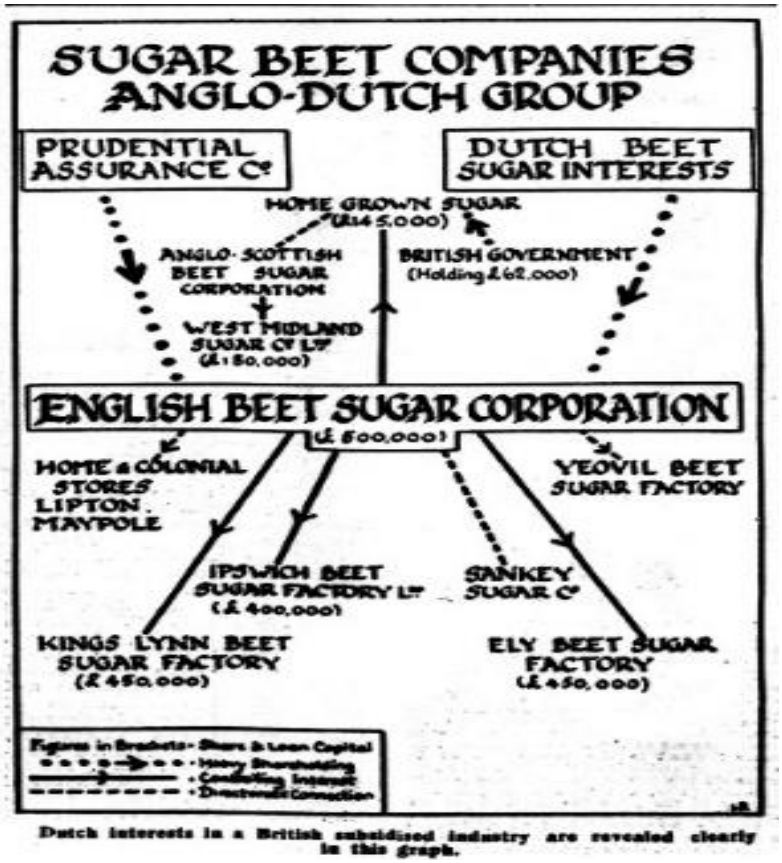
Sugar Market report, November the 3rd, 1934.

Market-Breakers.

“More sugar machinery is exported from Glasgow than from any other port in the world … The number of markets open for the sale of British sugar machinery has been seriously reduced by the operation of tariffs and other trade restrictions.

Whereas formerly a considerable amount of machinery was supplied from Scotland to such countries as Cuba, Java, and Formosa. These markets are now virtually closed to British machinery.”

—A.A.H. Douglas, in “The Times Trade and Engineering,” November, 1934.



Dutch interests in a British subsidised industry are revealed clearly in this graph.

Adjacent is a graphic layout of the make-up of the Beet Sugar Companies.

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Sugar Factories Busy.

Over £1,000,000 for Lincolnshire Beet Growers.

The Nottingham Evening Post, Monday, December the 31st, 1934.

Home sugar factories in the Eastern Counties, where thousands of tons of beet grown on local farms are turned into sugar, are exceptionally busy for so late in the season.

The crop has been a particularly heavy one, and in Lincolnshire alone, the beet factories are paying upwards of £1,000,000 to their growers.

A great deal of unemployment in the rural districts is being absorbed owing to the present activity, and country traders say that their Christmas returns this year have been better than for some time past.

The Central Sugar Company, of Amsterdam, has sold its controlling interest in the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, and the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory.

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“Mercury and Herald” Special Agricultural Page.

Farm and Market.

Sugar Beet Factory’s New Record.

Another Big Payment.

The Northampton Mercury and Herald, Friday, January the 11th, 1935.

Thanks to its extended facilities, the Central Sugar Company’s Peterborough factory was able to set up a new record last week, the quantity of sugar beet sliced amounting to no less than 23,400 tons.

Deliveries are still being made at the rate of thousands of tons a day, but it is anticipated that during the next week, deliveries will become lighter, and that the campaign may finish by about January the 25th.

The next “pay-out” to growers from the Peterborough factory will be made on January 14th, when cheques to the value of approximately £200,000 will be sent out in payment for December deliveries.

The Central Sugar Company of Amsterdam, which has been largely under the control of Mr Van Rossem, has, we understand, sold its controlling interests in the Ely, Ipswich and King's Lynn Beet Sugar Factories. It is understood that the purchase of these interests has been made on behalf of the Prudential Assurance Company.

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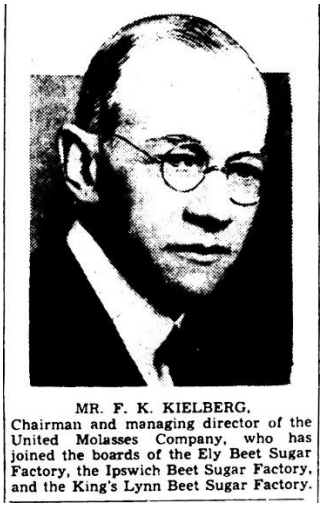
Photograph below and Caption.

The Western Mail & South Wales News, Monday, January the 28th, 1935.

Caption Reads:



MR. F. K. KIELBERG,
Chairman and managing director of the United Molasses Company, who has joined the boards of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, the Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, and the King's Lynn Beet Sugar Factory.

Mr. F K Keilberg.

Chairman and managing director of the United Molasses Company, who has joined the boards of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, the Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, and the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory.

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Ely Sugar Factory and the Ouse.

Action Dismissed.

The Suffolk & Essex Free Press, Thursday, April the 11th, 1935.

In the Chancery Division on Friday, the conclusion was reached in the case in which Mr Charles Thurston Nicholls, the owner of the Littleport fishery, brought an action against the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, for an injunction to restrain the alleged pollution of the River Ouse between Littleport Bridge, Brandon Creek and Southery by the effluent from the factory.

Defendants denied that they had discharged anything noxious into the river or that they were responsible for the destruction of fish.

Mr. F R Evershed, K C, and Mr. H S G Buckmaster appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr. F Morton, K C, and Mr. C Montgomery White, for the defendants.

Mr Justice Clauson held that Plaintiff had failed to make out his case, and the action would be dismissed with costs. His Lordship added that he was glad to say there had been the utmost good faith on both sides, and they had been doing their best to help the Court to get to the bottom of a very interesting problem.

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The “Remarkable Ouse”.

A “Pollution” Action Dismissed.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, April the 19th, 1935.

An action In the High Court, against Ely Beet Sugar Factory, brought by the Littleport fishery, for an injunction to restrain the alleged pollution of the River Ouse was dismissed.

In giving judgement, Mr. Justice Clauson observed that the River Ouse was a very remarkable river, and he described its peculiarities. He was told, (he said), that the river at Ely had not been dredged for thirty or forty years, with the result that about a mile above the defendant’s factory, a remarkable state of things existed.

The bed of the river in consequence was filled with impurity, the supply of which was almost continuous. That terrible state of affairs took place in a sluggish river, the bottom of which was disturbed by considerable barge traffic. In stormy weather, these highly unsatisfactory conditions became enormously aggravated.

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More Bonuses from Sugar Beet.

The Daily Herald, Wednesday, May the 15th, 1935.

Despite alleged poverty in the industry, a number of sugar beet companies are announcing increased profits and record share bonuses. Since the report of the Green Committee, which declared against the continuance of the beet sugar subsidy, leading industrialists interested, have waged a fierce campaign for further doles.

In the midst of that comes news, from company returns, which indicates the real profits that are being obtained from the industry.

As already reported in the “Daily Herald”, the Central Sugar Company has arranged a distribution of new shares, equivalent to a permanent bonus of 60 percent.

13 shillings and four pence a share.

Now the following companies have decided to pay bonuses to shareholders: --

English Beet Sugar Company, 12 shillings a £1 share.

Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, 13 shillings and four pence a share.

Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, 7 shillings a share.

These will absorb £740,000 in cash, and are in addition to dividend payments.

Yorkshire Sugar Company, yesterday announced a dividend of 15 percent, tax free, against 8 percent, less tax, last year. Shropshire Beet Sugar Company has declared a dividend of 20 percent, tax free, on deferred shares, against nil last year.

Recently, Tate and Lyle, Limited, which is interested in a number of beet sugar factories, announced at an extraordinary general meeting, the issue to every ordinary shareholder of two new shares for every five already held: –the equivalent to another permanent bonus of 40 percent.

The amount already paid out through the subsidy, –approximately £50,000,000, -–is sufficient to have bought up the whole British production of sugar, and distribute it free of all charge.

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News From Four Counties.

The Beet Sugar Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, May the 24th, 1935.

At an extraordinary general meeting of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, held on Friday, at Inveresk House, 346, Strand., Sir James Martin, chairman of the company, said: “When at the end of 1926, a large block of shares in this company was taken over by British interests, the articles of association of this company were altered, by adding a provision to Article 134, to the following effect: That no sums from time to time, carried to the credit of such fund or funds, (meaning reserve funds), may be invested in any other homegrown sugar factory, except with the previous consent of an extraordinary resolution of the company, i.e., 75 percent, of the shareholders.

As a result of great efficiency, engendered by expert technical knowledge, this company has prospered since its inception, and has accumulated reserves and other liquid assets far in excess of its normal manufacturing and trading requirements. Moreover, as the likelihood of expansion, by way of constructing new factories, has become more remote than ever, as the result of the restrictions placed on the total acreage that may be laid down under sugar beet,

we have decided to recommend to this meeting, that it would be only fair and reasonable to return to the shareholders a substantial part of the accumulated reserves.

With regard to the first part of the resolution, which deals with the distribution of the capital reserve of £30,000, I would like to point out to you, that your directors have been advised that this part of the distribution will not be subject to income-tax.

With regard to the second part of the resolution, namely, the £270,000 taken from the general reserve, this will be distributed free of income-tax, as these accumulations have already paid tax before, having been allocated to the reserve fund, I now beg to move: (1), that the sum of £30,000 standing to the credit of the capital reserve of the Company, be distributed among the shareholders by way of cash bonus, in proportion to the number of shares held by them respectively on May the 9th, 1935, and that such cash bonus be payable on June the 1st, 1935: (2), that a sum of £270,000, part of the general reserve of the company, be distributed among the shareholders by way of cash bonus, free of income-tax, in proportion to the shares held by them respectively on May the 9th, 1935, and that such cash bonus be payable on June the 1st, 1935. The resolutions were passed unanimously.

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Protest Meeting at Ely.

3,000 People Vote on Subsidy Question.

The Newmarket Journal & Free Press, Saturday, June the 8th, 1935.

Upwards of 3,000 farmers, smallholders, agriculture workers, and representatives of practically every industry in the Fens, attended an open-air mass meeting at Ely, to protest against the proposed withdrawal of State assistance for the sugar beet industry.

The following resolution, proposed by Sir Walter W West, and seconded by Mr. Stanley Street-Porter, was unanimously passed, to be sent to the Ministry of Agriculture.

“That this mass meeting, representative of land owners, farmers, smallholders, agriculture workers, and other trade interests concerned, urges the Government to take prompt and effective action by such means as they may consider, in the national interests best calculated to secure the maintenance and expansion of the sugar beet industry in this country on a permanent basis.

This meeting asserts its conviction, that a collapse of this invaluable industry, would prove a disaster of the greatest magnitude, not only to agriculture in general, but to the nation as a whole, resulting as it would in widespread unemployment and loss of purchasing power, from which every trade in the country would either directly or indirectly suffer.

It further urges the importance of an early pronouncement by the Government as to their future policy in relation to the industry, in order that farmers may be able to formulate their programme for next season’s cropping.”

Sir Walter West contended that sugar beet had been the backbone of the agricultural industry, both for the large farmer and the smallholder, and said he did not think any Government would be foolish enough to put their head in the noose, and do away with its production in this country.

Mr. S Street-Porter submitted, that by an expenditure of three or four million pounds on the sugar beet industry, the Government were producing hundreds of thousands of pounds, which otherwise would not be produced from the soil of this country.

Other speakers were Colonel W P Cutlack, who presided, Colonel Sir Edward Ruggles- Brise, M.P. for the Malden Division of Essex, and Chairman of the Conservative Parliamentary Agriculture Committee; Mr. George Dallas, formerly M.P. for Wellingborough; and Mr. W F C Garthwaite, prospective National Conservative candidate for the Isle of Ely, and Alderman J W Payne.

Mr. James A de Rothschild, M.P. for the Isle of Ely, was to have flown over from his home at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, but he sent a telegram regretting that fog prevented him from attending.

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Photograph and Caption.

The Daily Herald, Wednesday, June the 12th, 1935.

*SIR JAMES MARTIN, Chairman of Ely Beet Sugar Factory and King's Lynn Beet Sugar Factory. Both companies are increasing dividend payments.*

A photograph of Sir James Martin, and caption.

Caption reads:

Sir James Martin, Chairman of Ely Beet Sugar Factory and Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory. Both companies are increasing dividend payments.

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A Fen Hurricane.

Thousands of Acres of Crops Devastated.

The Spalding Guardian, Saturday, June the 15th, 1935.

Blowing with tremendous force, the hurricane which swept the Fens on Friday caused widespread damage on many farms in the immediate area of Peterborough, at Crowland, Bourne, Thorney, Yaxley and Farcet.

The wind lifted the sun-baked crust from the ground, and with it came sugar beet and carrots, the air being filled with flying roots and stones. At Farcet, sugar beet, mangolds, carrots and potatoes were destroyed.

So dense were the clouds of earth, that workers in one field were unable to locate each other. Many of the older agriculturalists say they cannot recollect so severe and so later a blow during the last fifty years.

Thorney and Yaxley were similarly visited and extensive damage done, especially to the sugar beet crops. Over a wide area in the Yaxley district. The dykes are filled with the fen soil.

At Thorney, it has been described as one of the most severe dust storms within living memory, whole fields being left bare.

A most remarkable effect was seen on Crowland Common, where it was like a desert storm.

Much damage has been caused to crops in Bourne and Deeping Fens. Sugar beet has been torn from the soil, and the land made waste. Potato crops have also suffered.

In many places the dykes are filled with soil, and one field in Bourne Fen is stated to resemble a pebble beach, many tons of soil having been blown away, leaving stones about the land.

## Isle of Ely Havoc.

A special correspondent of the London Press who visited the Isle of Ely during the weekend, writes: -- the worst dust storms in living memory have devastated thousands of acres of crops in the Isle of Ely. The damage will cost sugar beet and carrot growing farmers hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Many smallholders are facing ruin. The whole of the Isle and part of Huntingdonshire have suffered. The factories which are supplied with sugar beet from this area will receive only about 50 percent of their contracts.

Mr. Charles Sears, of Fodder Fen, one of the leading farmers of the Isle, showed me the damage which had been caused to his crops.

“The Fen has ‘blown’ before,” he said, “but never with such terrific force. The damage is nearly £1,000.” “I shall drill more sugar beet, but we shall lose at least five or six tons to the acre, even with the best results.” Mr. Alfred Heading, of Chatteris, who farms over 2,000 acres, told me he had lost over £1,000.

“I haven't been able to visit all my farms yet,” he said, “but I know that very heavy damage has been caused. After the frost, this is a bad blow. I know one man who had 100 acres of sugar beet. He has only 10 left.”

“It seems that everyone in the Isle of Ely has suffered and I have been told that the damage in Warboys Fen is very extensive.” The smallholders and farmers of Manea have also lost heavily.

Mr Albert Clark, a smallholder, told me of a man with a large family who had lost practically everything. The farm of Sir Ernest Shepperson, M.P. in Wimblington parish, is one of those which have been badly hit.

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Suggested Dropping of Sugar Beet Industry.

East Anglia's protest meeting this Week-End.

The South-West Suffolk Echo, Saturday, July the 13th, 1935.

A big meeting is to be held at Bury Saint Edmunds today, (Saturday), to protest against the proposal to abolish the sugar beet industry in this country, and it concludes the series of gatherings which have been held throughout the country by the Home Sugar Beet Defence Committee.

The need for everyone directly and indirectly concerned with agriculture to unite, and let the Government know the vital value they place upon the sugar beet industry still exists, in spite of the statement made in the House of Commons. The announcement in Parliament has led to some amount of misapprehension.

The Government has promised the subsidy for this year's crop, but what action is to be taken in the future, following up on the report of the Green Commission, has yet to be decided.

The far-reaching effects of this new industry, which in the first place has saved many farmers from disaster, can be gauged from the following striking figures which relate to the Bury Saint Edmunds factory alone. In the 1934 season, £916,600 was paid out to farmers for beet, £92,000 was disbursed in employees' wages, £37,500 paid to the Railway Company in freights, and approximately £100,000 paid to hauliers.

It is not difficult to imagine the dire effect on the area served by the Bury factory if the disbursement of this huge sum of considerably more than £1,000,000 were to cease.

Landlords, farmers, smallholders, farm workers, factory workers, haulage contractors, and their employees, railway servants, tradesman, ratepayers, engineers, housewives, members of local authorities, and the general public are all affected by the industry, and the organisers of the meeting urged that the Government must be told in clear and definite terms, that the Eastern counties is wholeheartedly against locking the gates of thousands of fields to beet growing, against the closing down of the great sugar factories of the country, against the throwing out of work of thousands of land workers, against bringing poverty to every tradesman in the country towns and villages, and against throwing out of employment the thousands engaged in the factories and auxiliary industries.

Sugar must be dearer if none is produced in this country, and local rates must rise by the huge increases of unemployment if the nation shuts down the growing of sugar beet.

The mass meeting in Bury is for the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, and the Isle of Ely, and special travel facilities are being arranged for the great gathering which is expected. Three halls have been engaged, –The Corn Exchange, the Town Hall, and the Athenaeum, –with loud speakers in each, and the Mayor of Bury Saint Edmunds, (Mr. S J M Sampson), will preside. Addresses will be given by Lord Cranworth, chairman of the Home Sugar Beet Defence Committee, Lieutenant-Colonel, E. Ryds, chairman, British Sugar Beet Society, and Lincolnshire Chamber of Agriculture; Mr George Dallas, of the Agriculture Section of the Transport and General Workers Union, and Captain F F A Heilgers, MP.

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MP's and Effect of Sugar Beet Subsidy.

Means more Employment in Agricultural Districts.

The Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror, Saturday, July the 13th, 1935.

In the House of Commons, yesterday, Mr. A N Skelton, (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Scotland), moved the second reading of the British Sugar, (Subsidy) Bill, which extends for one year, the beet sugar subsidy.

He maintained that the advantage of having this new form of farming could not be minimised. Whereas the number of workers in agriculture had declined since 1924, by 14.7 percent, there had been an increase in the beet growing areas of 4.8 percent.

In those districts, too, the statutory minimum for farm workers had risen by 1 shilling and sixpence a week since the subsidy came into operation.

Doctor Addison's Charge.

Doctor Addison, (Labour, Swindon), moved the rejection of the Bill on the ground that, while opposed to the abrupt termination of the subsidy, the House considered that this State assistance, intended to benefit agriculture, had been used to strengthen private monopolies and increase their profits.

"I have had some experience of profiteering at the expense of the State," he said, but I have never seen one more shameless than this. In the absence of the Government taking their courage in their hands and facing up to those interests, we have had no alternative but to move this motion.

"Deliberate Zig-Zag."

Sir Herbert Samuel, (Liberal, Darwen), said that the Labour Party were not taking a, "line of action", -- they were pursuing a deliberate zig-zag.

This subsidy came up again and again before the House, and the Country was made aware that this cuckoo which had been hatched In the Government's nest, being such a voracious bird, was opening its mouth and demanding still more Estimates and Supplementary Estimates.

It was absurd to suggest that the Chancellor as gaining from the Excise duty to the extent of about £2,000,000. If the industry did not exist, the same amount of sugar would have paid to the Exchequer, not £2,000,000, but £5,000,000.

A Reply to Doctor Addison.

Mr Amery, (Conservative, Sparkbrook) said that the Government and the country were substantially gainers by the present situation in the beet-sugar industry. The country was getting sugar cheaper than it otherwise would, and the Government were getting revenue.

Mr. J A Rothschild, (Liberal, Isle of Ely), contended that the existing situation made State assistance of the sugar beet industry necessary.

He declared that during the years 1929 to 1931, while Doctor Addison was Minister of Agriculture, the subsidy paid was on a much higher scale than that paid today.

Mr Lansbury, Leader of the Opposition, said that the Labour Party took up the position they did on this question, not because they liked it, but because of conditions over which they had no control.

Mr Elliott, Minister of Agriculture, replying to the debate, said that at times, exchanges became so lively, that it appeared as though they were discussing not sugar, but vinegar or pepper. The sum voted would be on the subject of further consideration by the House.

He was certain that none of them desired to see unemployment spread to the countryside, and the south-east coast become derelict. A case had been made out for the granting of a respite, while further investigations were made, and sentence of death should not be passed at present.

The Labour amendment was defeated by 134 votes to 36, and the Bill was read a second time.

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"Grass Will Grow in Streets."

If Sugar Beet Industry Ends.

From Our Own Correspondent, Bury Saint Edmunds, (Suffolk), Sunday.

The Daily Herald, Monday, July the 15th, 1935.

"If the sugar beet industry comes to an end, grass will grow in the streets of Bury Saint Edmunds."

Mr. S J M Sampson, the Mayor, made this prophecy last night, when he presided over the East Anglian demonstration here, that protested against the threatened withdrawal of the beet subsidy.

Eight thousand people attended. They came from Peterborough, nearly 80 miles away, from all parts of Essex, Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely, Norfolk, and even from Lincolnshire.

Mr. George Dallas, of the Transport and General Workers Union, declared that sugar beet had been a salvation of the arable districts in the eastern counties.

"Will Cause Crisis."

Captain F F A Heilgers, M.P., for Bury Saint Edmunds, remarked: "I do not want to go about my constituency seeing the villages looking derelict, farmers packing up and the men standing idle. I believe we are going to win the fight. I have great hopes."

Alderman E G Gooch, president of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, appealed to the factories to play the game.

He moved a resolution asking the Government to adopt measures which would permanently secure sugar production, as a part of the home-grown food supply.

It was supported by Mr. J Beard, of the Transport and General Workers Union, and was carried with enthusiasm.

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Beet Sugar Production.

Factories' Big Profits Last Year.

Ministry Issues Figures.

The Midland Daily Telegraph, Monday, August the 19th, 1935.

Profits ranging from £7,275 to £163,734 were made by British beet sugar factories during the financial year ended March 31st, 1935.

The accounts issued today by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, under the British Sugar, (Subsidy) Acts, 1925 and 1934, show the following favourable balances:

English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, (Cantley factory) £100,000;

Home Grown Sugar Limited, (Kelham factory), £7275;

Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, (Ely factory), £67,500;

Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, (Ipswich factory), £28,000;

Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, (Kings Lynn factory), £36,000;

Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, (Colwick and Spalding factories), £163,734;

West Midland Sugar Company, Limited, (Kidderminster factory), £54,185;

Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, (York, Poppleton, Felstead and Cupar factories), £10,161;

United Sugar Company, Limited, (Bury Saint Edmunds factory), £147,673;

Central Sugar Company, Limited, (Peterborough factory), £49,061;

Yorkshire Sugar Company, Limited, (Selby factory), £36,408;

Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited, (Allscott factory), £51,620;

Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, (Bardney factory), £36,211;

Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited (Brigg factory), £33,207.

Only one company shows a deficit, this being the British Sugar Manufacturers, Limited, (Wissington Factory), the amount being £751.

But this follows a debit balance on March 31st, 1934, of £32,713, so that during the past twelve months, there was a profit of £31,961, after allowing £16,648 for depreciation and income-tax.

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Photograph and Caption.

Two cranes loading the silos with Sugar Beet.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 20th, 1935.

GOOD START AT ELY

nicle Photo] [Eastern Press Agency

These great heaps of sugar beet are only a portion of the first day's takings at the Ely factory, which opened on Monday. It was considered an exceptionally encouraging start.

Caption reads:

Good Start at Ely.

These great heaps of sugar beet are only a portion of the first day's takings at the Ely factory, which opened on Monday. It was considered an exceptionally encouraging start.

***

Round the Farm.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, September the 27th, 1935.

The few beet factories are opening straight away. Ely factory opened on Monday in last week, Peterborough yesterday, (Thursday), Bury Saint Edmunds starts the campaign today, (Friday).

The Wissington factory opened for acceptance of delivery of beet last Monday. Permits were necessary, namely letters "X" and "A" and number 1, at this factory.

The beet crop has finished, –and finished light, –on the thin lands. On good soil, it is making weight. The earliest fields to be cleared, will be tackled accordingly.

Beet that has stopped growing through drought will start again on certain land when sufficient rain falls. Fresh leaves sprout. This growth may lower sugar-content.

The factories do not expect as much weight of beet this year. The season has not been so regularly good for beet or, for the matter of that, for any other crop.

An Isle of Ely correspondent writes that farmers are getting to work on the beet crops. Tests seem to indicate that the sugar-content will be high, but that the beets will be rather smaller than they were last season, and as a result, the yield per acre will be lower. Last season, free loading was made a great deal of use of by many growers, who got a big proportion of their crops away before free loading finished. This year it looks as if even more growers intend to get a big part of the crop away early. They will lose something in weight by doing this, but it is

expected that this loss will be more than counterbalanced by the convenience of getting the land cleared early.

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Sugar Beet.

The Herts and Essex Observer, Saturday, September the 28th, 1935.

The sugar beet campaign opened on Monday in various parts of the Eastern Counties. At Spalding, South Lincolnshire, the first consignments of beet were received at the factory. Operations also began at Brigg and Bardney, North Lincolnshire, and at Ely.

The Peterborough factory opens on Thursday.

Slicing will commence at the beginning of next week, when all the factories will be in full swing. Approximately 500 to 600 men will be employed at each factory.

The recent rains have resulted in a very satisfactory increase in the weight of the beet, while there is also a slight increase in the sugar content.

One ton of beet pulp is equivalent in feeding value to about eight tons of mangolds, and is much more convenient to handle. With plenty of hay and a little beet pulp to form a kind of mixed salad, with such grass as can be picked up, no stockman need fear to face the coming year. --The Farmer and Stock Breeder.

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New Chairman.

The Bury Free Press & Post, Saturday, October the 5th, 1935.

Mr. A Palache has been appointed chairman of the Boards of Directors of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, and the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, in succession to the late Sir James Martin.

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West Suffolk County Council.

Proposed £27,000 Fen Road.

The Bury Free Press & Post, Saturday, November the 16th, 1935.

A letter dated the 5th October, from the Mildenhall Fen Drainage Board, was read to the Highways and Bridges Committee, enclosing the following copy of a report of the Work Committee which the Board had adopted, and stating that in view of the report, any further action in respect of the proposed scheme for making annual payments of £50 to the County Council in respect of certain Fen roads would be deferred, viz.: --

“Fen roads. The committee had before them information as to proposals approved by the Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely County Councils for constructing a new road from Waterside, Isleham, alongside the River Lark to the second-class road at Prickwillow, at a cost of £27,625,

as shown in a report to the Cambridgeshire Council on the 20th of July, 1935, and to be defrayed as follows: Owners, £8,000; County Councils, £9,813; Ministry of Transport, £9,812; total, £27,625. These roads, if constructed, are reported to shorten the distance from Isleham to the Ely Beet Sugar Factory by four miles, and large quantities of beet grown in that area, and the parishes of Chippenham and Soham, would be conveyed over them instead of being taken round by Fordham, Soham and Ely, as at present. In addition, it is estimated that some 1,800 acres in Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely, would be benefited by the construction of the roads. The committee considered the question of the position of Mildenhall Fen, situate between the River Lark and Burnt Fen Main road, having regard to, (1); The proximity thereof to the proposed new road, (2); the general benefits which would accrue to 1,500 acres in the Fen, if a hard road were constructed with direct access to the Ely Sugar Beet Factory, instead of the circuitous route, which now has to be followed via West Row Village, Mildenhall, Isleham, and Fordham, (3); the increased fertility of, and development in the Fen, which are now rendered practically impossible, by lack of hard roads and direct access to markets. Having regard to the foregoing, it was resolved to recommend that the West Suffolk County Council be approached as, (1), the Highway Authority, and, (2), one of the largest landowners in Mildenhall Fen, suggesting that the scheme be prepared, providing, (1), that the portion of Cooks Drove from spring Hall Farm, to Engine, (or Fodder Fen) Drove, which the council have agreed to take over on terms, be reconstructed as a second class road; (2), that a new second class road from number 1, to the River Lark, be constructed along Engine, (or Fodder Fen) Drove, with a bridge across the River Lark, forming a link with the proposed new Cambridgeshire road; (3), for contributions from landowners, whose lands will be affected beneficially thereby."

Consideration of the matter was adjourned until the next meeting.

## Letters to the Editor.
## Sugar Beet Marketing Scheme.
## Replies to Colonel Long.

Sir, --I write in reply to Colonel Long's letter dated the 4th of November, 1935, in your issue of November the 9th. I am one of the three Suffolk representatives on the National Farmers Union Sugar Beet Committee and have therefore a right to reply.

May I say at once that I am absolutely positive that at all times my colleagues, (Major Ridley and Mr. A Symonds), and I, have one object, and one object alone, when, as the representatives of Suffolk, we have the privilege to sit on the Sugar Beet Committee. We are always entirely united, –not we three alone, but with our confreres from Norfolk, –in insisting on the prior claim of East Anglia to any benefits which may accrue from sugar beet growing.

As to the best way of securing those benefits, I suggest that it would be the act of a bigoted incompetent to say that he will not examine impartially, any scheme for the better marketing of sugar beet, and before he has any idea of the suggestions which may be contained in it. There are many things the producer must think of, and not least is the Government policy, that if the State is to help, –by legislation or otherwise, –producers on their side, must put their marketing house in order, the future of the marketing side, being an obviously weak link in the agricultural economy. Having said so much, I turn to the details of the proposed scheme as suggested by Colonel Long: Frankly, at present, there is no proposed scheme put before producers, although a scheme is before the Minister for his consideration, and this scheme has certain proposed amendments suggested at the present time, which may or may not be incorporated. But the scheme, be it good or bad, bears no likeness to what Colonel Long's informant has led him to put before your readers. The only object of the scheme, is to help the

producer. Let that be uppermost in everyone's mind. The number of seats on the proposed board allotted to the real sugar beet growing area, is such, that the pioneers of sugar beet growing, East Anglians are in a sound position. Add to the fact that the East Anglian representatives on the proposed board, are all virtually concerned individually with sugar beet growing themselves, and it must be realised how ill-founded is any suggestion that these people would tolerate any weakening of East Anglian position. I ask every reader to entirely suspend judgement in this matter, until the terms of the scheme are agreed and authoritatively put before the public, when they can be properly examined and explained. Until then, no man can form an opinion or give a judgement. To ask him to do so now is, I submit, to ask him to prove himself a person of no judgement, which I know your readers are not.

In conclusion, I ask your readers this question, is it fair or English to condemn unknown and unheard, the labours of a body of men whose sole object is the improvement of the lot of their brother farmers, until one has the results of their exertions put before one? Your readers certainly have not had anything but a ridiculous travesty of the scheme put before them in the letter to which I am replying. When the scheme is settled and is public property, I shall only be too pleased to try and elucidate any point in it, in an honest endeavour to aid the individual to come to the correct decision.

J S Howarth. One of the Suffolk Delegates, on the N.F.U. Sugar Beet Committee. Denham Castle, Bury Saint Edmunds.

Sir, -- In reply to Colonel Long's letter in last week's edition, may I say that in view of the possibility of a marketing scheme for sugar beet, many growers, like myself, are wondering what will be the levy imposed upon us. Last year our beet was supervised by the growers' representatives for a half-penny per ton. This year it has been raised to one penny, the original levy. It is common knowledge that the Bury Beet Factory works about 4,000 tons per day, which means 28,000 tons per week, which, at one penny per ton, gives a total of £116 approximately. There are only nine or ten people employed on our behalf at the factory, and I believe the usual pay is about £3 to £4 per week, which, taking the highest figure in both cases, only accounts for £40. What happens to the other £76? I know there are small incidental expenses such as stationery and postage, but surely that cannot use up all this money every week. Where does the balance go? Further, if this sum is required at present, what will be the amount required when the many managers, assistant managers, clerks and all other paraphernalia of a marketing scheme should come into existence? Heaven forbid!

A V J Chinnery. Lake Farm, Rougham. November the 14th, 1935.

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Ely Sugar Factory Effluent.

Fishery Owner's Appeal Again Adjourned.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, November the 22nd, 1935.

The Court of Appeal, composed of the Master of the Rolls, and Lords Justices Romer and Green, on Tuesday, continued hearing the appeal of Mr. Charles Thurston Nicholls, a London solicitor, who owns two fisheries near Littleport and Brandon Creek on the River Ouse, from the judgement of Mr. Justice Clauson in the Chancery Division, dismissing his action against the Ely Sugar Beet Factory, Limited. In that action, he claimed an injunction restraining the company from discharging effluent into the river so as to cause a nuisance or damage to his fisheries. Alternatively, he claimed damages.

Mr. Justice Clauson held that no damage or discharge of fish-killing effluent had been proved.

Mr. T Eastham, K.C., who appeared for Mr Nicholls, dealing with the factory's 1933 period of operation, said one of his points was that the arrival of the yellow effluent from the factory at Littleport Bridge coincided with the killing of fish there. The other was that soon after the factory began to discharge effluent, there was a colossal killing of fish. With regard to the 1934 campaign, evidence showed that the polluted water extended for six miles down the river from the factory.

The defence, he went on, could be summarised as being this: That all the trouble was due to pollution of the river by sewage and gas works and a brewery at Ely. But his, (counsel's) reply to that was, that those pollutions had never affected Mr. Nicholls fisheries. The Judge dismissed the action largely on the ground that no damage was proved. He, (the counsel) argued that it was unnecessary to prove pecuniary damage in order to succeed; and, moreover, Mr Nicholls was bound to take action to prevent the defendants acquiring a right to do that which he alleges they were doing.

With regard to the Judge's point that Mr. Nicholls must exclude all other causes of pollution, Mr Eastham submitted that where there were co-polluters, it was sufficient for him to prove that the defendants added something to the river which injured Mr Nicholls.

The hearing was adjourned.

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Sugar Factory Effluent.

More Evidence Read in Appeal Case.

The Lynn News and County Press, Tuesday, November the 26th, 1935.

The case for the appellant, which began on Friday, November the 15th, had not been completed on Friday when the hearing was resumed of the appeal of Mr. Charles Thurston Nicholls from the judgement of Mr. Justice Clauson, dismissing the action against the Ely Sugar Beet Factory Limited, in which he alleged that the factory had polluted the River Ouse so as to damage his fisheries in the river between Littleport and Brandon Creek, and Brandon Creek and Modney Drove, Southery.

For the third day, Mr. T Eastham, K.C., was wholly occupied with the reading of expert's evidence given before Mr. Justice Clauson for the appellant. Two of them, Doctors Firth and Jee, agreed that the sewage effluent at Ely could not possibly damage the fisheries as the defendants contended.

Several long-tabulated statements produced from tests made of river water by Doctor Jee, were referred to by Mr. Eastham, who informed their lordships that there was no dispute about the figures.

The Master of the Rolls said he was glad to know that; otherwise, it would be impossible to say when the case would come to an end.

The hearing was adjourned.

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“Molasses” to Control Macfie’s.

Big Liverpool Trade Deal.

Same Direction.

Chairman and Managing Director Remain.

The Liverpool Echo, Monday, January the 20th, 1936.

The United Molasses Company, Limited, announced that they have acquired a controlling interest in Macfie and Sons, Limited, the Liverpool sugar refiners.

Mr. James Allan Macfie will remain chairman of the board of Macfie and Sons, Limited, and Doctor A.C. Cumming, –who has joined the board of the Molasses Company, –will continue as managing director of the company.

The Macfie family have been connected with sugar refining continuously since 1788, and commenced refining in Liverpool in 1838.

Macfie's is one of the oldest sugar refineries in the country. It was founded by Robert Macfie, who started a refinery in Greenock, in 1788.

Other refineries were subsequently opened in Leith and Edinburgh, and in Liverpool, a refinery was started on the site now occupied by the present large premises near Exchange Station, in 1838. In the course of time, other branches were absorbed by the present Liverpool refinery.

The employees of the firm number over 600. The capital of the company is in the neighbourhood of £250,000.

A Birkenhead Link.

The United Molasses Company, which was formed in January 1926, owns and controls equipment for storage and land transport of molasses, including 23 tank vessels.

12 months ago, United Molasses acquired a shareholding in Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, and the Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited. The chairman and managing director is Mr. F K Keilberg, who for a number of years lived at Noctorum, Birkenhead.

Mr Keilberg, who is a native of Denmark, began his commercial career as the Liverpool correspondent of a Danish firm. He married Miss Dora Margaret Corfe, of Thornton House, Cheshire. He founded the company of which he is now head, and for many years was well known on Merseyside.

When he left Noctorum in 1927, he gave his residence there to the Birkenhead and Wirral Children's Hospital as a convalescent home, –a gift valued at £13,000.

He has also given large sums to a variety of causes, and in 1928 sent a cheque for £25,000 to the Mansion House Miners Relief Fund. At a British Legion bizarre at Birkenhead. About the same time, he made a gift of £500.

The Molasses capital runs into many millions, and represented a stupendous market value at its most prosperous period.

Science and Business.

Doctor Cumming provides another example of a distinguished scientist becoming a brilliantly successful businessman. An Australian by birth, after a university career in Australia and Great Britain, in which he gained many academic distinctions in chemistry and became a Doctor of Science, he was appointed Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh University.

During the war, he offered his services to the Government and organised highly successful TNT factories, first at Leith, where he converted a deserted egg factory to his purposes, until the Naval authorities objected to the presence of a high-explosive factory in the district, –and subsequently at Edinburgh.

After the war, he devoted his ability to industrial chemistry, and after being connected with a firm specialising in sugar-refining processes, he was invited to join the Macfie board as managing director nearly ten years ago.

During his association with the firm, Doctor Cummings has carried out a highly successful reorganisation scheme.

In addition to his position at Messrs. Macfie's, Doctor Cumming is chairman or director of several other firms in the sugar trade, and is also director of Messrs. Ramis Clark and Company, Limited, a Scotch chemical concern. He is one of the most popular figures in sugar and scientific circles.

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Sugar Beet Merger.

Lincolnshire Factories Included.

£6,000,000.

Plan to Augment Prices if Crop is Poor.

The Grimsby Evening Telegraph, Wednesday, February the 5th, 1936.

Beet factories in Lincolnshire are affected by the Government's plans for the industry given in the Sugar Industry, (Reorganisation) Bill, introduced by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Walter Elliot, on December the 20th, and issued yesterday.

It is proposed to amalgamate various companies and 18 factories, incorporating a total capital of about £6,000,000.

The companies concerned in the amalgamation are: --

| |
|---|
| English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Cantley, (Norfolk). |
| Home Grown Sugar, Limited, Kelham, (Nottinghamshire). |
| Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ely, (Cambridgeshire). |
| Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ipswich, (Suffolk). |
| Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Kings Lynn, (Norfolk). |
| Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation Limited, Colwick, (Nottinghamshire), and Spalding, (Lincolnshire). |
| Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Poppleton, (Yorkshire), Felsted, (Essex), and Cupar, (Fifeshire). |
| West Midland Sugar Company, Limited, Kidderminster, (Worcestershire). |

| |
|---|
| United Sugar Company, Limited, Bury Saint Edmunds, (Suffolk). |
| Central Sugar Company, Limited, Peterborough. |
| Yorkshire Sugar Company Limited, Selby, (Yorkshire). |
| Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited, Allscott, (Shropshire). |
| Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, Bardney, (Lincolnshire). |
| Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, Brigg, (Lincolnshire). |
| British Sugar Manufacturers, Limited, Wissington, (Norfolk). |

Rate of assistance.

This amalgamation, it is stated, however, may be affected either voluntarily in accordance with arrangements approved by the Minister with the consent of the Treasury, or if not, completed within a reasonable period after the passing of the Bill in accordance with a scheme prepared by the Sugar Commission, and confirmed by order of the Minister with the consent of the Treasury.

While the quantity of white sugar on which payment may be made is limited to the “standard” of 560,000 tons a year, this payment is not limited in time.

The prescribed rate of assistance for 1936, is five shillings, 3 pence a hundredweight. For future years, it is to be based on the ascertained results of the previous year, subject to adjustment, the variations in the price of raw sugar being the principal factor.

Principal Proposals.

The principal proposals in the bill are: --

The establishment of a permanent sugar Commission.

The amalgamation of all companies engaged in the manufacture of beet sugar by the formation of the British Sugar Corporation, with a working capital of £1,000,000 with a Treasury guarantee.

Payment of assistance to be limited to 560,000 tons of white sugar annually, the estimated amount of assistance payable in 1936, being £2,750,000.

An interesting feature is the provision of certain supplementary payments to the corporation for distribution among the growers of sugar beet, to augment the beet prices in the event of adverse farming conditions causing a poor crop in any year.

This supplementary payment will be limited to one-half of the saving in the cost of Exchequer assistance due to the smaller output of sugar, subject to a maximum payment of one shilling a ton of beet, of fifteen and a half percent sugar content.

The functions of the Commission are to be mainly advisory and supervisory, with a measure of executive authority on certain technical questions. Its expenses are to be met from public funds and are estimated at about £10,000 a year.

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Sugar Companies' Merger.

Woodston Factory in £6,500,000 Scheme.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, February the 7th, 1936.

The Woodston Beet Sugar factory is one of the concerns involved in the amalgamation proposed by the Sugar Industry, (Reorganisation Bill), the text of which was published on Tuesday.

The Bill was introduced by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Walter Elliot, on December the 20th, and proposes the amalgamation of all companies engaged in the manufacture of beet sugar, by the formation of the British Sugar Corporation, with a working capital of £1,000,000, with a Treasury guarantee.

The Bill provides for the appointment of a permanent Sugar Commission, to be charged with the duty of keeping under review the growing of sugar beet, and the manufacture, refining, marketing and consumption of sugar.

It will be comprised of a chairman, and not more than four other Commissioners, appointed by the Minister of Agriculture, with the consent of the Treasury.

Factories Merger.

The Bill next provides for an amalgamation of all the existing sugar beet factories into the British Sugar Corporation, Limited. Plans for this amalgamation have already been made by the factories, and are now in the Minister's hands.

The growers are next considered, and the Bill imposes on the corporation the obligation to enter into contracts for the purchase of home-grown sugar beet upon terms and conditions agreed, after consultation with the Sugar Commission, between the corporation and a Sugar Beet Marketing Board, or other body representative of the growers of sugar beet. (The growers have prepared a simple scheme of organisation under the Marketing Acts).

The Commission will be ultimately responsible for the efficient conduct of the industry, for it will be part of their duties to recommend the rate of Government assistance that is to be given to the industry. Such assistance is needed, because at present prices, no country in the world is producing sugar at a profit without State aid.

Combined Capital £6,500,000.

The Commission will also have to be satisfied that the growers are receiving a fair price for their beet, and a "fair wage" clause for factory workers is included in the bill.

For 1935, the corporation will be granted £240,000 for depreciation, which must be put to a depreciation reserve. The companies will also receive not more than £315,000, to distribute as interest on capital for the year. Their combined capital is about, £6,500,000.

In calculating the rate of assistance, the price of raw sugar will be taken into account. If the present price, say, 5 shillings per hundredweight continued throughout 1936, the effective rate of assistance for the year would be 4 shillings, 9 pence per hundredweight, which compares with five shillings, 8 pence in 1935, and seven shillings, 3 pence in 1934.

The standard quantity of white sugar eligible for the subsidy is 560,000 tons, so at 4 shillings, 9 pence, the cost of assistance in 1936 would be £2,750,000.

£1,000,000. Debenture Issue.

Sugar produced in excess of 500,000 tons or thereabouts, will automatically receive less subsidy, on the principle of the Wheat Act, which limits assistance to 27,000,000 hundredweight of wheat per annum. On the other hand, a clause in the new bill provides for supplementary payments to the corporation, to be apportioned among the growers in the event of adverse farming conditions causing a very poor crop.

The assets of the factories that the new corporation will takeover will consist of fixed assets only, but the treasury will guarantee £1,000,000 of Debentures issued by the corporation. This is unlikely to involve any additional liability upon public funds.

Refiners of sugar will be registered with the Commission. They, with the factories in the corporation, will agree upon the proportions of refined sugar that the various parties will produce. This working relationship between refiners and factories already exists.

Companies Involved.

The companies and factories to be amalgamated are as follows:

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|---|
| English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Cantley, (Norfolk). |
| Home Grown Sugar, Limited, Kelham, (Nottinghamshire). |
| Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ely, (Cambridgeshire). |
| Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Ipswich, (Suffolk). |
| Kings Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited, Kings Lynn, (Norfolk). |
| Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation Limited, Colwick, (Nottinghamshire), and Spalding, (Lincolnshire). |
| Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited, Poppleton, (Yorkshire), Felsted, (Essex), and Cupar, (Fifeshire). |
| West Midland Sugar Company, Limited, Kidderminster, (Worcestershire). |
| United Sugar Company, Bury Saint Edmunds, (Suffolk). |
| Central Sugar Company, Limited, Peterborough. |
| Yorkshire Sugar Company Limited, Selby, (Yorkshire). |
| Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited, Allscott, (Shropshire). |
| Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, Bardney, (Lincolnshire). |
| Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited, Brigg, (Lincolnshire). |
| British Sugar Manufacturers, Limited, Wissington, (Norfolk). |

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Sugar Beet Plan.

Proposed Merger of 15 Companies.

£5,000,000 Share Capital.

Government to Appoint Chairman.

The Edinburgh Evening News, Friday, March the 27th, 1936.

A £5,000,000 beet sugar corporation to take over the manufacture of beet sugar in this country, is advised in the report of the Beet Sugar Tribunal, set up to advise the Government on the question of amalgamation.

The corporation would be joined by the merging of the15 companies engaged in the industry.

Its establishment will amount to the adoption of the Green Committee's recommendation, that the manufacture of beet sugar should be concentrated in a single corporation.

As soon as the companies have themselves endorsed the scheme, amalgamation will be carried through without recourse, to the compulsory powers contained in the Sugar Industry (Reorganisation) Bill.

Share Transaction.

The total fixed assets of the companies concerned will be taken over by the new corporation in exchange for ordinary shares of a total nominal value of £5,000,000.

The original cost of the 18 factories was £9,400,000, and if depreciated at 5 percent a year, a present-day value of £6,100,000 is given. But the tribunal, like the Green Committee, held that depreciated replacement, (not original) costs, should be the basis of valuation, and on this basis the figure of £5,000,000 was agreed.

Working capital is to be raised by an issue of £750,000 debentures, guaranteed by the Treasury, which the transferor companies are to be required to take up for cash, without underwriting charges or commission, as provided under the Sugar Industry (Reorganisation) Bill.

Division of Savings.

Since state assistance is to be calculated annually in future as a deficiency payment to fill the gap between the Corporation's income and outgoings, some incentive to secure a sustained effort to reduce working costs must be provided.

This incentive will be secured by an agreement between the Minister and the Corporation as to the division between the State and the Corporation of savings affected. The share retained by the Corporation of the savings made in any year will decline as time goes on, but the bigger the savings, the more gradual will be the decline.

The effect of the proposed agreement will be, for example, that if the Corporation were to save £2,350,000 in the aggregate over a period of 10 years, the Treasury will benefit to the extent of £1,600,000 or 68 percent.

Dividends.

The Tribunal recommend that State assistance should be such as to enable the Corporation, if efficient, to earn, which, if savings were to amount to the above figure over the next 10 years, would give a total earning of five and a half percent, out of which, dividends and general reserves would have to be provided.

Dividends may not exceed 7 percent without the approval of the Government, and representations may be made to the Government if earnings fall below 4 percent.

It is proposed that the Corporation shall acquire the existing companies as from April the 1st next.

In view of the public interest involved, it is recommended that the Chairman of the Corporation and two other members of the Board be appointed by the Government, and that the Chairman should have the right to veto any proposal, which, in his opinion, involves questions of public interest, such veto to become absolute, if the Government should so decide.

The Share Capital.

The £5,000,000 share capital of the Corporation, it is proposed, shall be divided among the transferor companies as follows.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited. | 8.21 percent. | £410,774. |
| Home-Grown Sugar, Limited. | 2.66 percent. | £132,782. |
| Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited. | 6.49 percent. | £324,500. |
| Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited. | 4.60 percent. | £230,000. |
| Kings Lynn Beet Sugar factory, Limited. | 6.08 percent. | £303,750. |
| Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited. | 10.28 percent. | £513,967. |
| West Midlands Sugar Company, Limited. | 3.77 percent. | £188,377. |
| Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited | 10.93 percent. | £596,799. |
| United Sugar Company, Limited. | 9.80 percent. | £490,000. |
| Central Sugar Company, Limited. | 9.07 percent. | £453,459. |
| Yorkshire Sugar Company, Limited. | 4.72 percent. | £236,280. |
| Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited. | 4.84 percent. | £242,015. |
| Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited | 6.39 percent. | £319,275. |
| Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited. | 6.07 percent. | £303,555. |
| British Sugar Manufacturers, Limited. | 6.09 percent. | £234,498. |

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Ely Beet-Sugar Factory “Campaign.”

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, September the 11th, 1936.

The Ely Beet-Sugar Factory will commence its operations for the season on Monday, September the 28th, when free loadings will be accepted. The factory is dealing with the produce of roughly 26,000 acres. The employees associated with the factory number approximately 600.

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Farm and Livestock News.

Sugar Content Returns.

Complaints at Isle N.F.U.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, November the 13th, 1936.

At a meeting of the Isle of Ely branch of the National Farmers Union at March on Monday, complaints were received of lower sugar content returns from Ely factory than from other factories. A letter on the subject was forwarded by the Ely branch, and similar complaints were received from other districts.

There was also a letter from the Cambridgeshire branch, saying that at a meeting of the executive committee, very great dissatisfaction was expressed with comparative returns of sugar from beet supplied to the Ely factory and other factories. They inquired whether the Isle branch thought that any good purpose would be served by the two branches appointing a joint deputation to visit the factory, and discuss the subject with the management.

It was reported that the matter had been brought before the NFU Sugar Beet Committee, who had instructed their Coordinating Officer to visit the factory and go into the matter.

It was decided that the suggestion of the Cambridgeshire Branch be acted upon, and Messrs. S C Covill, T Pearson, and H G Morton were appointed as the Branch's representatives. It was further agreed that the Coordinating Officer be asked to make his visit along with the deputation.

Instances were mentioned in which sugar content returns from the Peterborough factory were lower than those of the Spalding factory, and it was decided that the Peterborough Branch be asked to join with the Isle of Ely Branch in sending a deputation to the factory, Messrs. L C Giddens, and J Gore, being appointed to represent the Isle of Ely branch.

Next Year's Beet Contract.

Resolutions were received from the March, Whittlesey and Ely branches, on the subject of next year's sugar beet contract terms.

The March branch recommended that the NFU be urged to instruct their representatives to adopt a firm attitude in negotiating the terms, and not to consider the acceptance of a price less than 38 shillings per ton, the branch being strongly of the opinion that the price should be 40 shillings per ton.

The Whittlesey branch asked that it be suggested to the NFU, that the minimum price should be £2 per ton for beets of fifteen and a half percent sugar content.

The Ely branch recommended that the NFU be asked to instruct their representatives to press for an increased price for sugar beet, and also for a preference price for sugar beet pulp to sugar beet growers.

The Committee adopted the March branch's resolution, and resolved that the other resolutions also be sent to Headquarters to show the feeling on the subject in the county.

It was stated that the NFU representatives and the Factories Committee had been unable to agree on terms and that the matter had been referred to the Commission.

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Ely Factory Alterations.

Tarehouse Operation

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, December the 4th, 1936.

Under the Sugar Beet Committee report, Mr. Wright regretted the absence of Major Proby, and Mr. McGregor moved the adoption. Mr. Wright stated that at the last meeting, it was decided that the deputation, consisting of Major Proby, Major E P Dawson, Mr H L Webb and Mr J S Weir, should visit the Ely factory. This visit had now taken place, and the following alterations are going to be carried out.

(1) Time of washing to be reduced from ten to five minutes.
(2) Tins with holes provided for draining beet.
(3) Two men employed on washing, or at least conditions made so that not less than three samples, are always waiting for rasp man to rasp.
(4) Holes to be punched in bucket used for weighing 10 beets.
(5) Rasping. The time during which a beet travels over the rasp to be increased 100 percent.
(6) Vertical play of beet clamp guide to be reduced to a minimum.
(7) Greater care taken to ensure that rasp brei tins are dry.
(8) The swilling out of filtering cylinders with the first few drops of the filtrate.
(9) Daily polarisation of composite sample of saccharimeter.
(10) Greater care taken to ensure a representative sample of ten beets are chosen, i.e., a greater proportion of small beet included.

The following resolution was adopted: --

“Unless the factories are prepared to accept a reasonable proportion of the risk by storing a certain amount of beet during the months of November and December, this county branch may be forced to consider advising members not to grow beet in the future.”

Sugar Beet Contract.

Mr. Wright regretted the absence of Major Proby who could have explained the 1937 contract to the meeting. He stated that the NFU hoped that members would sign the contract if they thought they could grow at a profit. On long distance beet, the factories agreed to absorb all carriage in excess of 7 shillings per ton.

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Company Meeting.

United Molasses Company.

Promising Change of Investment.

The Reorganisation of British Sugar Industry.

The Belfast News-Letter, Saturday, December the 19th, 1936.

The eleventh annual general meeting of the United Molasses Company, Limited, was held yesterday at Winchester House, Old Broad Street, London, EC.

Mr. F K Keilberg, (chairman and managing director), presided, and in the course of moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said: --

Two years ago, we acquired a substantial share interest in the Ely, Ipswich and King's Lynn beet sugar factories, but under the Sugar Industry (Reorganisation) Act, passed this year, these three factories, together with all other British beet sugar factories, were amalgamated into the British Sugar Corporation, Limited. In exchange for the company's shareholding in the three companies referred to, we received shares in the new corporation, of which I am a director.

There was no special reason why your company should continue to hold so large an investment in what is virtually a government-controlled corporation, permitted to earn only a small, although practically guaranteed, dividend. Your directors, therefore, disposed a portion of this investment, and utilised the proceeds towards the cost of acquiring the controlling interests in Macfie and Sons, Limited, sugar refiners Liverpool, with whom we had during the last few years, built up close and profitable business relations.

We have reason to believe that the return on the investment will prove more than satisfactory, but I should like to make it clear that apart from this, there are substantial advantages connected with our owning the controlling interest in Macfie's.

The Sugar Industry (Reorganisation) Act, in conjunction with the industrial agreement which is being entered into between the sugar refiners and the British Sugar Corporation, Limited, should for some years to come, ensure friendly and harmonious collaboration amongst the various sugar interests in the country.

## The Tanker Position.

Two thirds of the company's capital is invested in motor vessels, storage tanks and rail tank cars, motor lorries, etc., all connected with transport. Your company is essentially a storage and transportation company, and it follows as a matter of course, that earnings must be larger when rates of freight are remunerative, than in times of depression in the tanker market.

The c.i.f, (cost, insurance and freight) selling price of molasses is largely influenced by prevailing freight rates, and high tanker freights, therefore, affect not only the earnings of those of the company's tankers employed in carrying oil, but also those employed exclusively in the molasses trade.

The directors felt that it might be of interest to shareholders to know, that the company during the past year had an unusually large percentage of its tankers employed in carrying oil, and that this condition would most likely continue for the greater part of the current financial year. These exceptional conditions were brought about by last year's short supplies of molasses in the Far East, and consequent introduction of Cuban high-test molasses.

Two of our tankers continuously employed would have been sufficient to carry the quantity of high-test molasses we imported from Cuba to the United Kingdom last year, as against eight vessels which would have been necessary to carry the equivalent quantity of blackstrap from the Far East.

Fortunately, the advent of high test took place at a time when there was no difficulty in obtaining remunerative employment in the oil market, and, as mentioned in the director's report, tanker freights continue at satisfactory rates and at present prospects are encouraging.

## Eastern Supplies.

By the end of the company's current financial year, we hope once again to have large Eastern supplies available for shipment to Europe. Java will, in1937, produce approximately a quarter of a million tons more molasses than in each of the two previous years. In addition to this, there will next year be considerable quantities available for shipment from India. These two factors combined, make it reasonable to assume that if the demand keeps up, we shall from the autumn of 1937 onwards, be able to employ the greater part of our fleet in the Far Eastern trade.

Before closing my remarks regarding the company's great interest in the tanker market, I should like to repeat my last year's tribute to the helpful and constructive work of the International Tanker Owners Association, under the chairmanship of one of your directors, Mr. H T. Schierwater. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of the stabilising influence of this association on the tanker market.

The report was unanimously adopted

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"Stand by for Evacuation".

Flood Disaster Feared in Fenland Area.

Critical Hours.

The Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror, Wednesday, March the 17th, 1937.

The Fenland areas around Ely, where floods are threatening thousands of acres of the finest agricultural land in the country, last night prepared for the worst.

Many experts engaged in trying to stem the rising waters in rivers and dykes feared a disaster.

The fate of many homes and farms hung in the balance about midnight, when the tide running in from the wash, was expected to cause the waters to overflow the riverbanks and flood vast tracts of land.

A dramatic warning was broadcast by the BBC last night. It was:

"The River Great Ouse Catchment Board, desires to warn residents in all fen areas to stand by and be ready to evacuate in case of breaches of riverbanks.

The Board cannot guarantee to prevent an overflow, and a breach may occur. The areas to which this applies are those below river level in Cambridgeshire, including the Isle of Ely."

The BBC last night broadcast a message from the chief engineer to the pumps: "Will all pumps in the South level slow down tonight between 8:30 pm and 12 midnight, as the position is very critical. The safety of the Fens may depend on this."

"Expected the Worst."

In a long call to the Ministry of Agriculture in London last night, Mr. H Rosefear, the Ministry's chief drainage official, told official quarters that tragedy seemed likely in the Fenlands.

Mr. Rosefear, who toured the whole of the affected area last night, expressed the view that the climax to the day and night vigil that had been maintained for the past four days, was close.

Major Fowler of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory, who is acting as transport officer for the emergency arrangements that have been put into operation, told a reporter last night, "You can expect the worse. I can't see how we can save many of the fens."

Cambridge undergraduates went to the district tonight, to take the place of some of the exhausted workers on the riverbanks.

Over 1,000 men were trying to raise by a few inches the level of the banks of the Ouse and its tributaries. Many there, had had no rest for days. A squad of lorries was organised to dash from place to place with men and material wherever danger threatened.

By order of the catchment board or people living in the Hamlets of Welches dam and Purls Bridge, on the Old Bedford River, have been evacuated to the village of Manea, which is on higher ground. People living at Mepal, another village on the same river, have also been evacuated. The Great Ouse Catchment Board reported at midnight that there was no break anywhere along the river frontage.

Fen floods: Latest.

As the morning advanced, the level of the water steadily declined. At 2.30 am, the Great Ouse Catchment Board reported that there were no breaches in their flood defences. There had been a slip at Hilgay, but by sending barge loads of clay, all danger was averted.

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Alterations.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, April the 16th, 1937.

Extensive alterations are to be effected at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory during the next three months.

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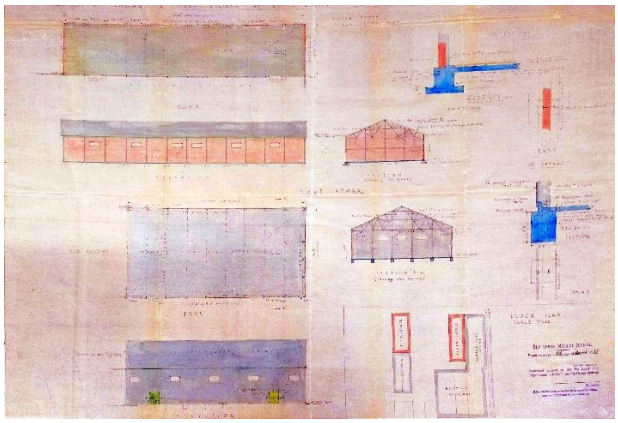
Ely.

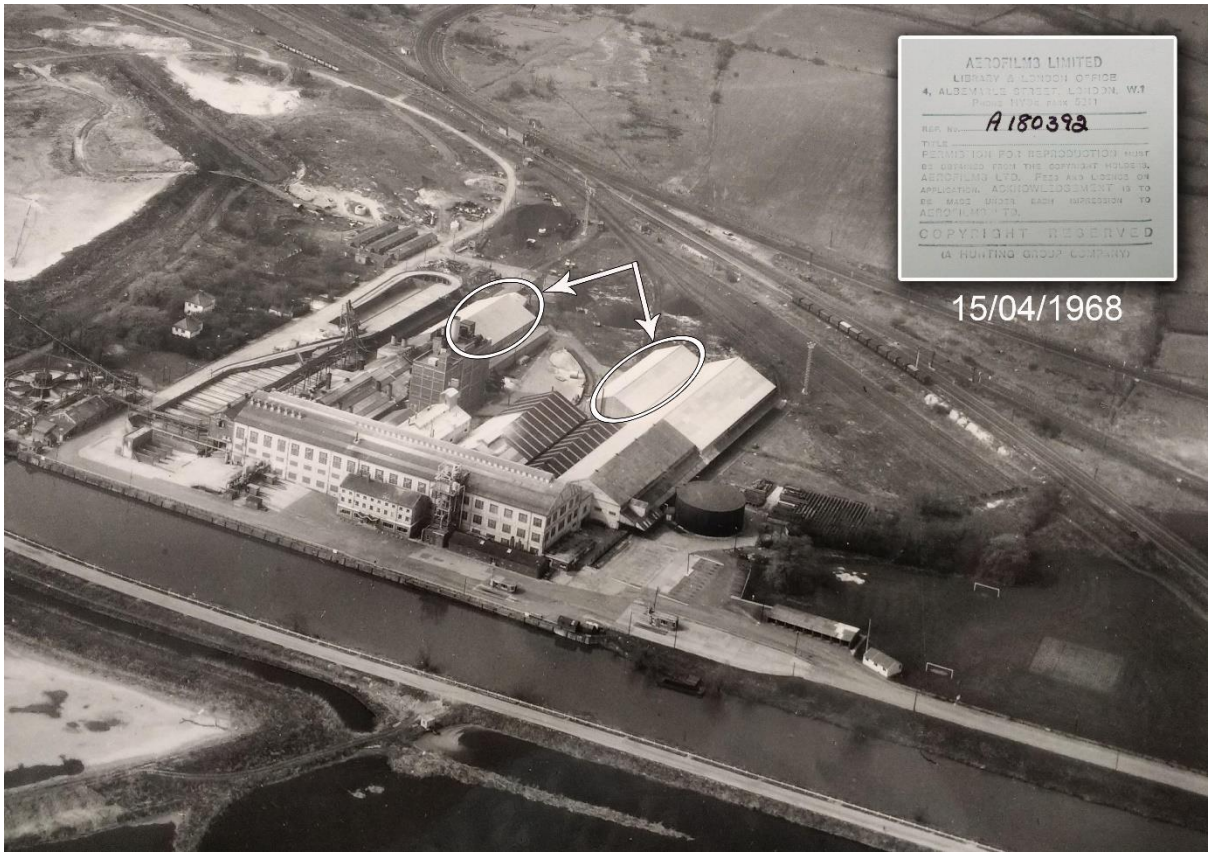
The Ely and Lynn Advertiser, Friday, April the 16th, 1937.

During the next three months, extensive alterations will be made at the Ely Sugar Factory. Already work has begun on the enlargement of the sugar and pulp stores.

KDT11/SE/1/919

ELY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.
Plans received 13th day of March 1937.
Council's Surveyor
Approved subject to the Bye-Laws and Regulations in force in the Ely Urban District.
Chairman.
N.B.—No footings or drains to be covered unless seen and approved by the Surveyor.
WHITEHALL CONTRACTORS LTD
11, WATERLOO PLACE S.W.1.



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Accident at Ely Beet-Sugar Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, December the 10th, 1937.

An Ely man is in Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, with critical injuries following a mishap at the Ely Beet-Sugar Factory on the first of the month.

The man, Horace Butcher, aged 34, of 41, New Barns Road, Ely, caught an arm in a pulp conveyor. First aid was immediately given, and a doctor was summoned, and Butcher was then taken to hospital and detained. His left arm had been severed.

Frost and Beet.

Does frost affect beet? --Yes. If the narrow end of the root goes dark, the sugar content will decline. At Sprowston in 1935, it was found that the sugar percentage of the frozen roots was approximately two and a half percent lower than that of similar roots which had been protected from frost. This difficulty is not likely to be met early in the season, but where beet is to be clamped for a considerable time before carting, it is advised that growers should take some steps to guard against severe frost.

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Factories Close Early.

Sugar Beet Crop Failure.

The Nottingham Evening Post, Tuesday, December the 28th, 1937.

East Anglian sugar factories which, in a normal season, would have been running until well into January, are now either closed, or are to close shortly.

So disappointing has the crop been, that the total output of home-grown sugar will show a drop of tens of thousands of tons. Nearly every farmer who grew the crop has suffered a loss.

At the Peterborough factory, the vats are being kept working and deliveries of late beet crops will be accepted for the next fortnight, but the Ely factory closed on Friday night.

The difficulty has been created, because sowing of the original crops was delayed by flood conditions. There are many hundreds of acres of late beet still to be lifted, but there is difficulty in finding labour for the work and transporting the crop.

Considerable advances in prices have been arranged in the contracts which growers are being invited to accept for next year.

***

Farm and Live-Stock News.

Beet Sowing to Start Shortly.

Early and Good Beet Predicted.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, March the 11th, 1938.

It is expected that beet sowing will commence very shortly, and, with this in view, the "Standard" approach Mr. Glenn Mowbray, as to prospects.

Mr Mowbray said contracts have come in exceedingly well, and consequently, the factory had as great an acreage in prospect, as they had had at this date during the last three or four years.

Indications are that sowing will start very soon, and from past experience, early sown crops produce a heavier tonnage than those sown later. The company are looking forward to a good beet year. Funeral of Sir Fred Hiam.

A Thousand People at Ely Service.

The funeral of Sir Frederick Hiam took place on Friday. The first part of the service was held in Ely Cathedral, and the burial took place at Ely.

The congregation in the cathedral numbered more than 1,000, and hundreds of people lined the streets. The Bishop of Ely, the Dean of Ely, and the Presentor, took part in the service. Among those present were: --

Captain and Mrs. Wilson, (son-in-law and daughter); Mr. G T Hiam (brother); Mr. and Mrs.T Pearson; and Mr. and Mrs. A R Corbett; (brothers-in-law and sisters); Mr. A K Corbett; Mr. R Hiam; The Misses Moulton; Miss Oldfield; Nurse Townsend; Mr. and Mrs. B S Raby; Mr. J Back, (secretary); Mr. A Michie; Mr. S Back; Mrs. I Raby; Mr. and Mrs F Giddens; Mr. Lucas;

Mr. P Giddens; Mr. R T Doughty; Mr. W E Summerton; Mr. H W Hoye; Mr. Viney; Mr. Constable; Mr. Buckingham; Mr. R J Gannaway.

Major E A Belcher; Major Gordon Fowler; Sir Walter Wool West, (Custos Rotulorum for the Isle of Ely); Mr. A H Clark; Mr. S A Whittome; Doctor H C Brown; Alderman H J Martin; Alderman T Peake, (High Sheriff for Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely); Mr. Henry Thompson; Mr. Douglas Reid; Major J Grounds, (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries); Mr. J Donald Grounds; Mr. H J Smith; Mr. H H Trueman; Mr. H G Martin; Mr. C E Cross, (representing the Ely branch of the National Farmers Union); Major Posth.

Mr. W Hemmant and Mr. A G Wright, (representing the Potato Marketing Board); Mr. E T L Baker, (representing the Chairman of the Great Ouse Catchment Board); Mr. Walter Wright, (representing the Cambridgeshire Conservative and Unionist Association); Mr. Norman A Chater, (representing the Secretary of the Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Agricultural Society); Mr. H Willemstyn, and Mr. E R Blount, (representing the British Sugar Corporation, Ely); representatives of the Cambridge Town Football Club; and members of the household staff.

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Local Topics.

Dock Rescue.

The Lynn News and County Press, Tuesday, April the 4th, 1939.

Mr. J Bell, a Lynn man, working on the Ely factory coal barges, was responsible for rescuing the second engineer of the *MV Steersman,* from the Bentinck Dock on Thursday. The man fell into the dock while stepping ashore just after his vessel had berthed.

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News From Four Counties.

Denver.

Lynn Man’s Sudden Death.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, April the 29th, 1938.

While towing a number of empty barges down the Ouse towards Denver Sluice, Mr. Thomas Alfred Smith, aged 56 years, of 29, Sir Lewis Street, Lynn, skipper of the towing tug, was taken suddenly ill and collapsed. The tug was passing the estuary of the Wissey at the time. The barges were left at the side of the river, and the tug, the “Ely B,” belonging to the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, conveyed her skipper at top speed to Denver Sluice, where medical aid was summoned. Doctor Elsie Johnson, (Downham), was quickly on the scene, but, after an examination, could only produce life extinct. PC Warren, (Hilgay), represented the police and the Lynn District Coroner, (Mr. Donald F Jackson) was notified. Later, Doctor Johnson conducted a post mortem examination of the body and after receiving her report, the coroner decided that no inquest was necessary.

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Demonstration of Beet Cultivation.

The Newmarket Journal & Free Press, Saturday, June the 4th, 1938

Arranged by the Cambridgeshire Agriculture Committee, in conjunction with the Bury Saint Edmunds and Ely Sugar Factories, a tractor demonstration was held on Wednesday, on the fifty acres beet field of Mr. B Ratford, of Great Wilbraham. There were a score of tractors and cultivators at work, and they were seen by 700 farmers.

Shortage of labour, and the necessity of costing accurately, have increased the interest in tractor-cultivators. In the case of sugar beet, the time-factor in cultivation is important. Everybody saw something new in watching the field operation of machines previously noted at agricultural shows.

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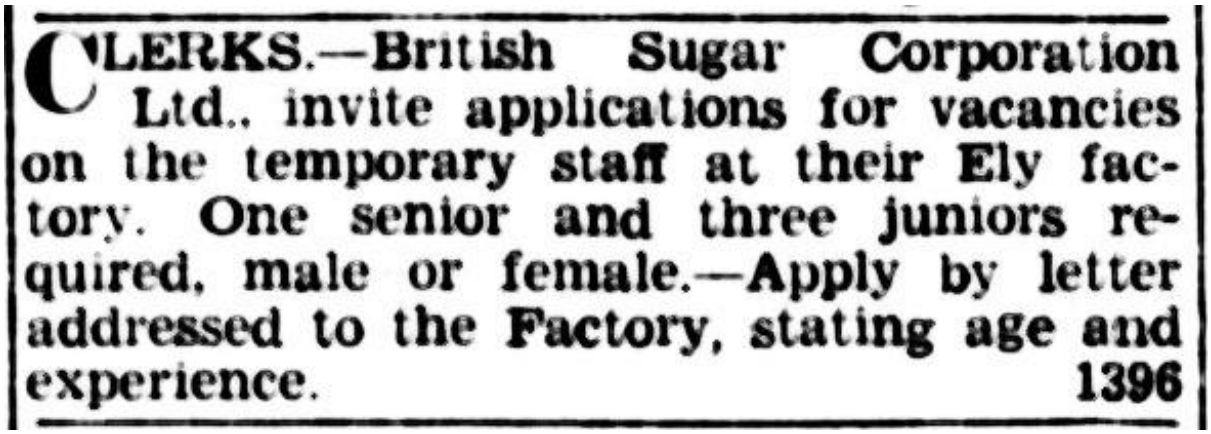
Vacancies.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, September the 16th, 1938.

A Newspaper clipping and caption.



CLERKS.—British Sugar Corporation Ltd., invite applications for vacancies on the temporary staff at their Ely factory. One senior and three juniors required, male or female.—Apply by letter addressed to the Factory, stating age and experience. 1396

Caption reads:

Clerks—British Sugar Corporation, Limited, invite applications for vacancies on the temporary staff at their Ely factory. One senior and three juniors required, male or female. —Apply by letter addressed to the Factory, stating age and experience.

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The Sugar Beet Campaign Approaches.

Improved facilities for unloading lorries at the Ely Factory.

The Cambridgeshire Times, Friday, September the 23rd, 1938.

Every preparation is being made at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory for the opening of the 14th campaign of an industry which has come to play an integral part in agriculture in this district.

The beet is definitely late, and for that reason there has been some difficulty in deciding upon the date of opening, but it is expected to be early in October. A more satisfactory feature is that there is reason to believe, on the average, the beet will be better than last year. Given a continuance of suitable weather, improvement in growth and sugar-content may be hoped for.

The Factory will once again be employing some 500 men, and even that number is quite a small percentage of those engaged directly and indirectly in the business, embracing farm work and transport by road, rail and water.

To relieve congestion.

Necessary repairs, improvements and alterations to mechanism and plant have been made during the summer months, and another most important scheme has been completed, which should prove of the utmost benefit to road vehicles.

In previous campaigns, much difficulty has been experienced in accommodating lorries for unloading, and queues of vehicles were daily to be seen. In consequence, much valuable time was lost to the contractors, who were eager to be unloaded and to return for further consignments of beet.

To get over this obstacle, the Factory, at no inconsiderable expense, has had an excellent concrete road built round a large concrete flume, which will have the effect, once lorry drivers have become acquainted with it, of relieving congestion. It will be possible under this new arrangement for 40 vehicles to be unloaded, and as each vehicle is empty, it will have no difficulty in getting away.

The road runs from the old flume on the main drive along by the side of the railway lines, which it crosses, at a point opposite the Wheel bungalow.

Messrs. Leighton, of Lowestoft, were the contractors for the new road.

Once again, however, the Factory wish to impress upon growers the importance of doing their utmost to ensure that regular deliveries of beet are received from the start of the campaign to the finish, to facilitate an economical and efficient working of the plant.

If a grower begins late, the Factory has to give primary consideration to the claims of those who have been giving regular deliveries, and the consequence is that growers who start late are liable to find part of their crop held back towards the close of the campaign. In short, if they will endeavour to comply with the factories requests to give equal deliveries throughout the week, they will not only help the Factory but themselves also.

Main deliveries by road.

Delivery by road has always been especially easy in the case of the Ely Factory, and the new facilities provided show that they are concerned with the hauliers' interests.

All types of motor lorries will soon be seen on the roads leading to the Factory, due to the fact that practically the whole of the tonnage dealt with is taken from land within a 20-mile radius, and the experience has proved that it is much better and quicker to transport beet from the fenlands by road.

Many farmers nowadays run their own lorries and it pays them to do this in view of the special rates available under the annual Road Fund duties payable by them. The following examples show how this works. The figures in parentheses being the amount paid by vehicle owners who are not able to claim the agricultural rates:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 12 hundredweight | £10. | (£10). |
| 12 to 20 hundredweight | £11. | (£15). |
| 20 to 30 hundredweight | £12. | (£20). |
| 30 to 40 hundredweight | £13. | (£25). |
| 40 to 50 hundredweight | £14. | (£30). |
| 50 to 60 hundredweight | £16. | (£35). |

For each additional ton or part of a ton in excess of three tons, £2 is charged for agricultural vehicles, much less than ordinary rates. These figures, however, relate to all vehicles fitted entirely with pneumatic tyres. For other vehicles, whether in agricultural or general use, the rates are slightly higher.

Agriculture users paying these specially reduced rates of licence duty are automatically exempted from the need of obtaining any additional licence under the Road and Rail Traffic Act.

Further to this, if the full rate of licence duty is paid, the agricultural users may carry goods for payment for other farmers if they are in possession of a Class C licence.

## A difficult season.

Material improvements have been carried out for the delivery of pulp, while another feature, the purchase of waste lime, will still be in operation.

Factory lime is most economical to use on land within a radius of at least 20 miles of the Factory, and it is available at exceptionally low prices. The Government's Land Fertility Scheme, with its slag and lime subsidies, has also been a means of increasing the demand.

It has been a difficult season on the whole, and much of the beet suffered from “black fly.” This, however, has been counteracted in the majority of instances by suitable treatment, and in recent weeks, there have been definite signs of improvement.

As already stated, it will be late, but with a continuance of the present fine weather, this should enable it to come well up to the average, if not better.

The Factory expect to deal with 19,000 tons of beet, per week.

Some idea of the improved facilities for road vehicles at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory afforded by the new concrete road and flume is given in the above photograph.

The flume is 180 feet in length, and 32 feet wide, while the road which encircles it, is 30 feet wide, and will accommodate 40 lorries.

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Sugar Beet Workers.

Industrial Court Awards Higher Wages.

The Nottingham Evening Post, Thursday, October the 27th, 1938.

The dispute between the British Sugar Industry National Trades' Union Negotiating Committee and the British Sugar Corporation, which has been before the Industrial Court, has been settled by the court awarding, "that the basic campaign rates in each sugar beet factory of the British Sugar Corporation, Limited, shall not be less than those set out below.

Ely, Wissington, Spalding, Allscott, Kings Lynn, Brigg, and Kelham, --1 shilling, and 1 penny per hour.

Bury, Cantley, Bardney, Kidderminster, Peterborough, Cupar, Selby, and Felstead, --1 shilling, and one and a halfpenny per hour.

Colwick, Poppleton, and Ipswich, --1 shilling, and two pence per hour.

The increase of 1 penny an hour, claimed by the Union, was granted only in the case of Ely and Wissington. Poppleton, Colwick and Ipswich, received an increase of a Farthing an hour; and the remaining factories received an increase of a halfpenny an hour.

Men who are retained by the corporation after the year's "campaign" are to receive the same rates of pay as during the "campaign," provided that they are doing the same work.

Effect is to be given to these awards from the beginning of the 1938 "campaign." The number of people affected is about 10,000 in the 18 factories of the corporation.

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Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, December the 30th, 1938.

The last load of beet was delivered at Ely Beet Sugar Factory on Tuesday evening, when the campaign ended. Weather conditions have made things very bad for both the grower and the factory during the past few days, while during the season, conditions have not been too favourable for lifting the crops which have been lighter.

An official of the factory stated that the campaign had been dragged out as long as possible in order that beet might be got in. Crops this year, he said, were light, and most disappointing. The factory dealt with 180,000 tons, a little less than last year. In 1937, the campaign ended early in December.

***

Problems of Isle Farmers.

Ely Factory Flume.

The Cambridge Daily News, Wednesday, January the 11th, 1939.

The National Farmers' Union forwarded a copy of a letter received from the Sugar Corporation saying that they were unable to accede to the request that the road around the new flume at Ely factory should be raised, as this would be a most expensive proposition, and in addition, would make it difficult for lorries to collect pulp.

It was resolved, that the NFU be asked to endeavour to arrange a meeting between representatives of the committee, and the manager of the factory.

A Sugar Beet Request.

The Ely branch suggested that the NFU be asked to approach the Sugar Corporation for a concession in respect of deliveries of sugar beet on rail to Brigg factory, in consequence of the Ely factory closing down before some of the farmers could complete their deliveries.

It was stated, that the permits for the Ely factory were insufficient to enable some growers to get their beet to the factory before the frost set in on December the 16th.

On the beet sent to the Brigg factory, there was increased cost of transport, and the dirt tare was very heavy, on which carriage had to be paid.

It was resolved that the recommendation be forwarded to the NFU.

***

Isle Farmers and National Farmers Union.

Ely Factory Flume.

The Cambridge Daily News, Wednesday, February the 15th, 1939.

It was reported that, with the consent of the British Sugar Corporation, a meeting had been arranged at the Ely Sugar factory between the manager of the factory and representatives of the Committee.

The object of the meeting was the discussion of the subject of the new flume; the Corporation having stated that they could not lower the walls or raise the level of the roadway.

Mr Pearson, a member of the deputation, said that good reasons were given for the Corporation's attitude, and they had agreed to provide a man to help with the unloading.

***

Ely.

The Sugar Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, April the 28th, 1939.

The Sugar Factory, for the first time since 1932, is to begin refining operations on May the first, and work will be continuous, with night and day shifts for about three months. Employment will be available for some 200 men.

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Disastrous Ely Blaze.

Firemen's 3-Hour Fight.

Old Brewery Gutted.

The Cambridge Daily News, Thursday, September the 28th, 1939.

One of the most disastrous fires seen in Ely for many years occurred last night when the old brewery was completely gutted.

About 40 members of the Ely Fire Brigade worked tirelessly in checking the mass of flames from spreading to adjoining premises.

Occupants of these premises hastily evacuated their homes as the flames spread, and the heat became more intense.

Furniture was removed to places of safety by members of the public, who continually fought their way through overpowering smoke and heat.

The blaze was at its height about 7 o'clock, when the old portion of the brewery was belching forth flame to a height of about 60 feet, and which were seen for many miles around.

Fireman, although aided with a plentiful supply from the river, found considerable difficulty in approaching the building, owing to the close proximity of adjoining property, but, with nine jets pouring 1,500 gallons of water per minute on the building, they managed to gain the upper hand about 10:00 pm, after a three hours struggle.

Falling Debris Menace.

Falling debris constituted a grave danger as these firemen ventured closer to the blazing mass. Huge girders came crashing down from the four-storey building, along with brickwork, masonry, flooring and roofing material.

The most serious threats were from a tall chimney stack, and a huge water tank situated high up in the building.

Fanned by a slight breeze from the north-east, the lower portions of the premises, used for bottling ginger beer and for the storage of thousands of bottles, were gradually devoured at the same time, threatening a stock of well over 100 tons of coal.

Volumes of smoke continued to pour across the park to the higher part of the town, while burning debris fell on cottages on the west side, which abutted Ely's public air raid shelter.

Fortunately, these buildings were well protected with sandbags, otherwise, these too, might have caught fire.

As a precautionary measure, the electric supply for the lower half of the town was cut off because of the danger of the flames causing a short through melting the joints of the main supplies.

## Store For Bags.

The old brewery buildings were used for the storage of bags by the Beet Sugar Corporation. The building was packed to capacity with them, and it is believed that the fire was due to combustion caused through these stacks of bags.

First to raise the alarm was Mrs. T Rogers who lives nearby. She informed our representative that at 6 o'clock she heard a cracking noise. "I rushed out into the lane, thinking that some boys were again throwing stones at the old brewery windows.

Then I saw smoke and flames coming from the windows and roof of the building. I at once rushed across to my neighbours, who immediately phoned the police."

Mrs. Rogers declared that although the heat was terrific and that the brewery's 80-foot chimney stack immediately overlooked her house, she made no attempt to evacuate her home, but went to bed when she had ascertained that the wind was blowing the flames away from her domain.

She could not sleep, however, because of the noise made by the firemen in breaking into the burning building and the falling of debris.

Eighty-one-years-old, Mrs. F L Harlock, who also lives near the building, was given shelter by a friend. All the furniture on the ground floor of her house was removed.

## Tribute to Brigade.

Mr. W T Kempton, Honorary Second Officer of the Brigade, told our representative that it was one of the most serious fires Ely had known.

Thirty-five members of the Brigade, including auxiliaries, and all the available equipment were used in combating the blaze.

The Ely Sugar Factory's fire pump was also placed at their disposal. He praised the efforts of the firemen, who, he said, had accomplished notable work in preventing the fire from assuming larger proportions.

Only part of the old brewery remains. The property belonged to Colonel W P Cutlack of Ely, and the damage is estimated at about £10,000.

The old building was originally owned by the late Mr. F L Harlock, but with the amalgamation with the present Ely brewing company, Messrs. Hall, Cutlack and Harlock, –the business was transferred to Forehill.

Police guards were posted around the shell of the burnt-out four-storey building this morning, for it is feared that the walls may collapse.

In any case, it has been decided to remove the water tank from its precarious position, and at the same time further precautionary measures will be adopted.

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Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

Road Deliveries on Sundays Decision.

The Cambridge Daily News, Saturday, October the 14th, 1939.

Owing to the lighting restrictions, cranes at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, which were used at night to unload deliveries by water and rail traffic, can now only be used in the day-time.

In the circumstances, these cranes have to be used during daylight, entirely for water and rail deliveries, but in order to relieve the situation created by restricted number of working hours, farmers are being advised by the Corporation, that the factory will be open for the reception of beet by road on Sundays, at the usual times, otherwise they do not see how they can possibly cope with the quantity of beet to come in by road.

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News From Four Counties.

Ely.

Fire at Sugar Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, October the 20th, 1939.

A fire which broke out at the offices of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory has caused considerable inconvenience to office work because of essential papers destroyed. The factory's auxiliary fire pump was engaged until well after midnight in combating the outbreak, which was discovered in a despatch office about 9:45 p.m.

All available hands were rushed to the scene, and office equipment and important documents were, as far as possible, removed to places of safety. The firemen, in gas masks, did good work in checking the outbreak from spreading to the adjoining offices, because the despatch room, situated on the third floor, was not easily accessible, particularly in view of the smoke pouring through the windows and through the lower rooms.

Considerable damage was also caused by water, which seeped through the floors of the various departments, causing a dislocation of telephonic communications and the electric light. An official of the factory stated that the damage did not appear to be serious. Although there was some delay and inconvenience, the office staff were carrying out their normal duties. The main factory was not affected.

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1940 Sugar Beet Prices.

Kelham Factory 51 Shillings per Ton.

The Newark Advertiser, Wednesday, November the 15th, 1939.

The following prices for sugar beet of the 1940 crop, accepted for delivery at the factories in England of the British Sugar Corporation, named below, have been agreed between the British

Sugar Corporation, and the National Farmers Union. The corresponding prices for 1939 are shown in brackets.

Bury Saint Edmunds, Cantley, Ely, Ipswich, Kings Lynn, Peterborough, Spalding, Wissington 50 shillings., (46 shillings, and 3 pence).

Kelham, Bardney. Colwick, Felstead. 51 shillings., (47 shillings, and 3 pence).

Allscott, Brigg, Kidderminster, Poppleton, and Selby 52 shillings., (48 shillings, and 3 pence).

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The Beet Industry.

615,000 Tons a Year at Ely.

The Cambridge Daily News, Wednesday, November the 22nd, 1939.

At the weekly meeting of the Ely Literary Society, held in the Countess of Huntingdon Congregational Church schoolroom on Monday evening, instead of a lecture, the members were shown a film on, “The Beet Sugar Industry in Great Britain.”

Mr G W Barwell presented the film.

The Rev. V H E Ritson, (secretary), was in the chair, and he thanked Mr. C Cousins, Mr. E R Blount, and Mr Barwell, for getting the film from the British Sugar Corporation.

Mr. Barwell said that most of the sugar beet in England was grown in the Eastern Counties, especially in Norfolk. Sugar beet was first grown on the Continent, and the first factory in England was at Cantley, in 1920. The acreage grown was 3,045 acres. Ten years later, there were 18 factories with an acreage of 320,000, and 360,000 tons of sugar were produced each year. The film went on to show the cultivation of the land and the sowing of the sugar beet. It explained that one acre of sugar beet today, would produce as much sugar as 17 acres of wild beet. Sugar beet was one of the most highly bred crops, and it was due to the patient work of Continental breeders that we produced the beet of today.

American Machines Best.

Thinning, singling and lifting was then dealt with. Lifting should be done at the right time when the beet was ripe. Ripe beet have drooping leaves and no fibrous roots. Machines were shown which lifted the beet, cut the tops off, and leave the beet ready for carting. The English machines shown were not as perfect as the American ones. The tops were fed to cattle on the land, and two tons of tops were as good as one ton of swedes to sheep, while excess tops should be stored or used on the land as manure. The beet was then carted to the factories.

Mr. Barwell said that at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory they dealt with 500 lorries,150 to 250 rail trucks, and about 20 barges in an average 24-hour day. When the beet arrived at the factory a sample was taken, weighed, washed and re-weighed to get the dirt tare. The beet was taken into the factory from the flumes by water, and were cut into small pieces called cossettes. The raw juice was got from the beet by diffusion, and the raw juice was then purified by milk of lime. It was then evaporated, and was known from then on as thick juice. After another purifying process, the crystalline sugar was formed, and then it was granulated and put into bags and stored ready for use.

615,000 Tons a Year.

In an average year at the Ely factory, 615,000 tons of home-grown sugar was produced, while a by-product of 300,000 tons of pulp was used as food for stock. Sugar beet was grown by farmers because it was the one crop with which he could be assured of a market, and any crop could follow sugar beet on the land.

A vote of thanks to Mr Barwell was proposed by the Rev. V H E Ritson.

***

Round The Farm.

Ely Sugar Factory.

The Lynn Advertiser, Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald, Friday, February the 16th, 1940.

During the last “campaign,” the Ely sugar factory dealt with 296,000 net tons of beet, in 104 days, and produced over 40,700 tons of sugar and 25,600 tons of pulp.

The average yield per acre was 11.73 net tons, the highest recorded average yield during the 15 years the factory has operated, and the average sugar-content was 16.01 percent.

About £700,000 will be paid to the growers for the crop at an average of £27, 17 shillings, and four pence per acre.

There is no prospect of routine work in connection with spring seeding being attempted for some time to come. The condition of the land is such that ample time must be allowed; otherwise, greater difficulties will present themselves when the desirable tilth is being sought.

At the time of writing, it looks as if this month can be completely “put on one side," and we must hope now for a long spell of dry weather for the big task on hand.

Influenza.

Influenza is at present widespread; deaths from influenza in the county boroughs and great towns of England and Wales during January were 960, compared with 803 in January 1939.

The sickness is a complicated subject, and so far, has baffled full elucidation. There are virus influenzas, and there may be others clinically almost indistinguishable from them. Historically, Influenza is probably traceable back to the time of the Crusades.

Great pandemics have been recognised since the 16th century. The disease was named influenza in the 18th century by Sir John Pringle, the originator of the Red Cross idea, and the founder of modern military medicine.

The name derives from the Italian word for influence, and recalls the astrological theory that the illness was due to the influence of heavenly bodies.

There were four influenza pandemics with their succeeding epidemics in the 19th century, and the deadly triple-waved pandemic of 1918-19 is still vivid in the memories of many of us, for it killed more people than the operations of war.

Since the Great War, the disease has from time to time caused much sickness and incapacitation and dislocation of business.

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Sugar Factory Clerk Sentenced.

Fraudulent Transactions Over Seven Years.

The Bury Free Press & Post, Saturday, June the 1st, 1940.

For a series of fraudulent transactions extending over seven years, a dispatch clerk at the Ely Beet Sugar factory, J*** W****** G******, age 41, was at Cambridge Assizes, sent to prison by Mr. Justice Hilbery.

G****** pleaded guilty to stealing 81, 2 hundredweight sacks of sugar, of the value of £163, 8 shillings, the property of the British Sugar Corporation, Limited, to making a false entry in the books of the Corporation, purporting to show that a firm was debited with 44 tons, 10 hundredweights of sugar in October,1936, and to maliciously damaging books, papers and documents, and parts of an office, the damage amounting to £200, at Ely on October 9th, 1939.

The prosecution was by the British Sugar Beet Corporation, who alleged that the series of frauds extended from 1932 to 1939, and the total sum involved was £1,115, of which the accused had received in money £934.

His Lordship said he would have sent accused to penal servitude were it not that he had suffered punishment, as shown by the completely disordered state of his mind; that since the discovery, he had earnestly devoted himself to clearing up the chaotic conditions which he had produced, and that he had pleaded guilty and had not put forward a false and lying defence. He would serve a sentence of 21 months imprisonment on each count, to run concurrently.

***

Sugar Beet Prices for 1941.

The Sleaford Gazette and Journal, Friday, September the 27th, 1940.

The Ministry of Food has announced the following prices for sugar beet of the 1941 crop accepted for delivery at the factories of the British Sugar Corporation, named below: --

Bury Saint Edmunds, Cantley, Ely, Ipswich, Kings Lynn, Peterborough, Spalding, Wissington, --Beet price, 61 shillings, 6 pence per ton.

Bardney, Colwick, Felstead, Kellham, --62 shillings, 6 pence per ton.

Allscott, Brigg, Kidderminster, Poppleton, Selby, --63 shillings, 6 pence a ton.

The prices are based on a sugar content of 15 and a half percent, and are subject to an addition or deduction of three shillings and 4 pence a ton, for each 1 percent, by which the sugar content is greater or less than 15 and a half percent.

A bonus of 1 shilling and 3 pence a ton, will be paid on all beet accepted for delivery in September, 1941, or after December the 31st, 1941, provided that the grower has complied

with the clause regulating deliveries of beet. The growers' rights in respect of dried pulp, as set out in the 1940 contract, have been retained for 1941. The prices correspond to an average gross return of 66 shillings, and 10 pence a ton.

Black-Out Times.

| | |
|---|---|
| Friday, September the 27th, | 7.22 pm, to 6.25 am. |
| Saturday, September the 28th, | 7.19 pm, to 6.28 am. |
| Sunday, September the 29th, | 7.17 pm, to 6.30 am. |
| Monday, September the 30th, | 7.15 pm, to 6.32 am. |
| Tuesday, October the 1st, | 7.13 pm, to 6.34 am. |
| Wednesday, October 2nd, | 7.10 pm, to 6.37 am. |
| Thursday, October 3rd, | 7.08 pm, to 6.39 am. |

Lighting-up time for vehicles is half-an-hour later than the above p.m. times, and ends half-an-hour before the above a.m. times.

***

The 1942 Sugar Beet Terms.

Local Factories to Pay 75 shillings a Ton.

The Lincoln, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury and Guardian, Friday, December the 5th, 1941.

The terms have been announced for sugar beet of the 1942 crop, accepted for delivery at the factories of the British Sugar Corporation.

Ely, Peterborough, Kings Lynn, Spalding, Ipswich, Bury Saint Edmunds, Cantley and Wissington factories will pay 75 shillings a ton, compared with 61 shillings, and 6 pence this year;

Bardney, Colwick, Felstead and Kelham factories, 76 shillings, compared with 62 shillings, and 6 pence; and Allscott, Brigg, Kidderminster, Poppleton, Selby factories, 77 shillings, against 63 shillings, and 6 pence;

The Corporation will defray railway freight charges above 7 shillings per ton, on all beet accepted by the Corporation, for delivery to the factories at Allscott and Kidderminster.

These prices apply to beet with not more than 15lb tare, per hundredweight, loaded into railway trucks at the growers nearest railway station.

The prices related to beet, properly topped and washed, having a sugar content of 15 and-a-half percent, and will be subject to additions or deductions at the rate of three shillings and four pence per ton, for each 1 percent, by which the sugar content is greater or less than 15 and-a-half percent.

Growers' privileges in respect of dried pulp have been retained.

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Photograph and Caption.

The Illustrated Magazine, Friday, July the 24th, 1942.

*SUGAR-BEET : This is another most profitable crop for the fens, for the warm fen soil gives a bumper return. Much of it can go direct from the fields to the Ely factory by barge, the most economical form of transport.*

The photograph above, is of two men in a field of sugar beet, one hoeing the sugar beet rows.

Caption reads: --

Sugar Beet: This is another most profitable crop for the fens, for the warm fen soil gives a bumper return. Much of it can go direct from the fields to the Ely factory by barge, the most economical form of transport.

Local News.

Advertisement.

The Newmarket Journal & Free Press, Saturday, September the 5th, 1942.

Former male and female workers, required by the Ely Beet Sugar Factory for the coming campaign, commencing towards the end of September, should make immediate application to secure a seat in the bus, to and from their home. A bus service will be in operation between Newmarket, via Burwell and the Ely factory, for the 6am - 2pm - and 10pm shifts. Apply without delay, and mark the envelope, in the corner, “Labour.” (Advert).

***

Fen Rivers Used for Transport.

Stanground Barges as Beet Conveyors.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, November the 26th, 1943.

Describing the greater use now made of Fenland waterways, our March correspondent writes that Messrs. A V Jackson's barges from Stanground are a familiar sight on the rivers.

On November the 18th, he saw on the Nene, at March, a string of eight barges pulled by a steam barge. They were carrying sugar beet from Sir Ernest Shepperton's farm at Floods Ferry to the Ely factory. The barges ply between Stanground and the Ely factory, passing through Stanground sluice, Ashline sluice, along the Twenty-foot River, through March, Marmont Priory sluice, into the Ouse at Salters Lode, and then through Denver sluice, along the Ten-mile River, to the factory.

The barges are used to carry beet and artificial manure. A string of eight will carry about 120 tons, effecting a big saving in road transport. Last year during the beet season, four strings of eight barges passed through March, conveying 480 tons. As to the time taken to complete the trip, a lot depends on the tide in the tidal river, the barges sometimes having to wait until conditions are favourable.

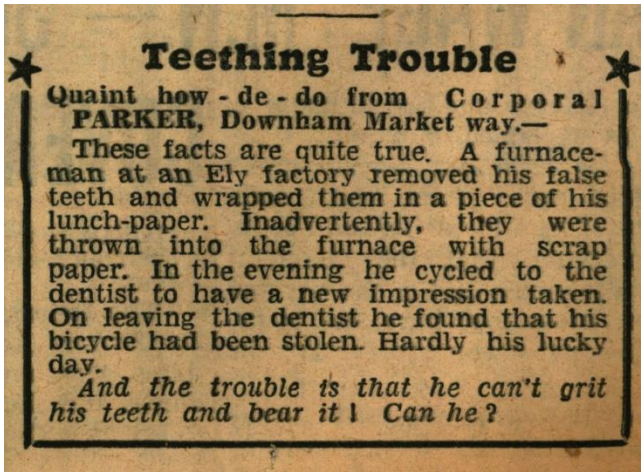
***

Live Letters.

Teething Trouble.

The Daily Mirror, Thursday, November the 9th, 1944.

A Comical Tale in the letter's column.



**Teething Trouble**

**Quaint how-de-do from Corporal PARKER, Downham Market way.—**

These facts are quite true. A furnaceman at an Ely factory removed his false teeth and wrapped them in a piece of his lunch-paper. Inadvertently, they were thrown into the furnace with scrap paper. In the evening he cycled to the dentist to have a new impression taken. On leaving the dentist he found that his bicycle had been stolen. Hardly his lucky day.

*And the trouble is that he can't grit his teeth and bear it! Can he?*

A Newspaper Clipping above and caption.

Quaint how-de-do from Corporal Parker, Downham Market way. —

These facts are quite true. A furnaceman at an Ely factory, removed his false teeth and wrapped them in a piece of his lunch-paper. Inadvertently, they were thrown into the furnace with scrap paper. In the evening, he cycled to the dentist to have a new impression taken. On leaving the dentist, he found that his bicycle had been stolen. Hardly his lucky day.

And the trouble is, that he can't grit his teeth and bear it, can he?

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Our Letter Box.

Growth of Sugar Beet Industry.

Address at Burwell.

The Newmarket Journal, Saturday, April the 21st, 1945.

The Burwell and District Discussion Society held a successful meeting in the Senior School on Tuesday week.

Mr. B C Priest was in the chair, and introduced the speaker, Major Fowler, of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory Staff. Speaking on the history of sugar, he said the first sugar was extracted from sugar cane in India, somewhere about the 8th and 9th century.

The sugar content in cane was about 12 percent, and there were considerably more impurities to be extracted in manufacture than from sugar beet. Although, on some land, sugar beet has a sugar content of 20 percent, more sugar could be grown per acre from cane, owing to the fact that a much closer plant stand could be obtained.

During the 18th century, sugar beet was grown on the continent for cattle fodder.

In the latter half of the century, a man named Ackroyd, extracted sugar from the beet. From that beginning, the industry developed.

Just prior to the last war, some 75 percent of the sugar consumed in this country was refined from imported raw sugar. That was a considerable source of revenue to the Exchequer. The War, 1914 to 1918, showed the need for home produced sugar.

Some Belgian engineers tried to improve the Beet Sugar industry at a factory, but they were not very successful. The concern was bought by a Dutchman, Van Rossum, about 1920 to 1921, and although he was hampered by having to pay over £4 per ton for washed beet, and an excise duty of 16 shillings, and 3 pence per hundredweight, he did show that sugar could be produced in this country.

Owing to the heavy losses in the first two years, he approached the Government, asking to be relieved of the excise duty. The Government of the day met the request, by offering a subsidy, but retained the duty. Between 1930 and 1935, there were some 52,000 growers, producing three and a half million tons of washed beet.

Major Fowler said he thought that for a healthy future, farmers should not be asked to grow more than they could reasonably manage, and that the Factory should not be asked to open before October and close on Christmas Day, as that was the best period for the beet harvest. The speaker met a number of criticisms in a very able manner, and answered satisfactorily a number of questions.

The meeting showed in unmistakable manner; it's warm appreciation of Major Fowler's address.

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National Farmers' Union News.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 14th, 1945.

Sugar Beet Harvesting Machines.

Correspondence was presented with regard to the importation of John Deere sugar beet harvesting machines, for which the branch has been pressing. It appeared that 19 machines were being supplied to agents in the county, and that although they had been held up in New York awaiting a shipping licence, it was understood that they were now on the way and were expected in time for use on this year's crop.

Ely Sugar Factory.

The Ely branch wrote that they understood that October 3rd had been fixed as the opening date for the receipt of sugar beet at Ely factory, and they asked that opening on an earlier date be pressed for, especially as the crop was earlier than usual this year.

The Chairman undertook to approach the Sugar Corporation on the subject.

It was reported that steps had been taken, to obtain the growers staff, to serve at the Ely factory during the campaign. On the recommendation of the Ely branch, six assistants and a clerk had been appointed, and two more assistants remained to be nominated.

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Here Comes Next Year's Sugar Ration.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, September the 25th, 1945.

This year's beet campaign opens this week.

Lynn Beet Sugar Factory opens for receiving beet on Thursday. Wissington factory opens next Monday. In both cases there will be free loading of deliveries by rail and road until further notice. Spalding opens on Thursday, and Ely on October the third.

There is a shortage of labour to handle the heavy crop. Soldiers and prisoners-of-war will be brought in to help. The Ministry forecasts that the yield will be above average, and it is expected that the sugar content will be higher than usual, given good weather.

The 400,000 acres to be harvested should supply Britain's domestic ration of 500,000 tons of sugar.

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Isle Farmers Meet.

Danger of Spread of Eelworm.

Resolutions to National Farmers Union.

Dealing With Sugar Beet.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, November the 9th, 1945.

The serious danger of the spread of eelworm from the planting of uncertified Scotch seed and other seed from eelworm infested land, was again emphasised at the monthly meeting of the Isle of Ely County Committee of the National Farmers' Union, held at March on Monday. Resolutions were adopted asking the NFU to endeavour to effect the prohibition of sale of such seed. Mr. C A Jacobs, (chairman), presided over a good attendance and representatives of the local branches.

"Very Considerable Concern."

A reply was received from the NFU to the Committee's recommendation that the Union should press for prohibition of the sale of Scotch seed potatoes from land infested with eelworm. The letter stated that the NFU Potatoes Committee, viewed the matter with very considerable concern. They advised growers not to buy seed for which a certificate had been refused, and were approaching the Ministry of Agriculture, asking that the sale of seed potatoes for which a seed certificate had been refused, should be banned.

In the course of discussion, one member expressed the view, that the Ministry of Food should take all such potatoes and process them for cattle food, or some other method should be adopted for keeping them off the market. Another observation made, was that if the Ministry could make an order prohibiting the sale of seed potatoes from sugar beet eelworm infested land, it would be simple and more to the point, to make a similar order applying to see potatoes from land infested with potato earworm.

Refusal to Make an Order.

The Committee were informed that the Ministry had been pressed to make such an order and had refused to do so. It was also stated that the order in respect of seed potatoes from sugar beet eelworm infested land was not being enforced.

It was finally resolved that the NFU be asked to endeavour to secure the inclusion in contracts for the sale of Scotch seed potatoes, of a clause prohibiting the sale of seed grown on eelworm infested land.

It was also stated that a considerable quantity of once-grown seed came from Lincolnshire, where much of the land was infested with eelworm. The Committee decided to send to Headquarters in respect of English-grown seed, a recommendation similar to that relating to Scotch seed.

An inquiry was received from the March Branch, as to the steps taken to check the quantities of Scotch seed potatoes sold under certificates granted for particular crops.

It was decided that Headquarters be asked to put forward the proposal that labels bearing the certificate number should be attached to all bags of seed potatoes, as a means by which officials could make checks.

## Early Move Regarding Sugar Beet.

Mr. E Mortimer Rose, one of the county representatives on the NFU Sugar Beet Committee, stated that the tonnage of sugar beet to be dealt with at the factories this season was so considerable, that at Ely factory, it was anticipated that the campaign would continue until towards the end of January, even with an open season.

Having in mind the experience of last season, when the factories were closed while a considerable tonnage of beet remained on growers' hands, and when much of the beet sent to Spalding factory (reopened to deal with it) was rejected as frozen, he suggested that the NFU should ask the Sugar Corporation to join with them in approaching the Ministries with a view to forestalling a similar situation this year.

Mr. Rose mentioned certain points that should be put forward, one of which was that the increased quantity of beet to be dealt with was due to instructions from the Ministries of Agriculture and Food, and that the factories had no control over conditions which made the campaign run so long.

He also suggested that they should submit to the Ministries, that if difficulties arose through no fault of the factories, or of the growers, both of whom were directed by compulsory orders, some machinery should be set up so that the growers would be properly compensated if they had frozen beet which the factories could not slice.

The Committee adopted these suggestions and decided that they be forwarded to the NFU.

## Prisoner Labour.

A circular letter was received from the NFU concerning prisoner of war labour and the agreement reached between the Ministry of Agriculture, the NFU and the workers unions, for the setting up of county panels to deal with complaints concerning displacement of civilian agricultural workers by German prisoners of war.

A letter was also received from the Isle of Ely War Agricultural Executive Committee asking the Branch to appoint a representative to serve on the Isle of Ely panel and a deputy.

The Committee appointed the chairman, (Mr. C A Jacobs), as the representative, and the vice-chairman, (Mr. A Deptford senior), as the deputy.

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## 88,730 Tons of Beet.

## Sugar Content 16.68 Percent.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, November the 9th, 1945.

Reporting to the Executive Committee of Peterborough County branch of the National Farmers Union on Saturday, Mr. F M Odam, Supervisor of grower's representatives at the Woodston beet factory, stated that deliveries up to October the 29th were 88,730 tons of clean beet.

The average sugar content was 16.68 percent, the average dirt tare was 4.4 lbs per hundredweight, and tops 2.5 lbs.

Headquarters were asked to take immediate steps to refute a statement in a London newspaper on Saturday on sugar beet content. Figures quoted, it was stated, were “fantastically above the true ones. “

Class B Releases.

A motion by Mr. W S Abbott, calling upon headquarters to press for speedier demobilisation under Class B, in view of the possible repatriation of Italian prisoners working on farms was carried.

The branch had asked headquarters, in view of the increased sugar beet acreage, to see that sufficient labour was made available. The reply was that headquarters were very concerned about the future when voluntary labour, and military help might not be available, and were pressing for action to be taken well in advance, to safeguard the labour supply for the future. The branch could rest assured that the union would keep the matter constantly before the Ministry.

Power For Farms.

The Secretary reported that a special committee appointed by headquarters had met the Incorporated Association of Electric Power Companies, which represents companies covering approximately two-thirds of Great Britain. This, it was stated, represented a big step towards the Union's objective–the supply of electricity to all farms.

***

Men and Women Wanted.

Advertisement for Campaign Workers.

The Newmarket Journal, Saturday, September the 28th, 1946.

**Ely Beet Sugar Factory.**

**MEN & WOMEN WANTED**
for Beet Campaign
October-January.

8 hour shifts; good wages and working conditions; works canteen available.

Apply in person or by letter to
**British Sugar Corporation,**
**Beet Sugar Factory, ELY.**

Advertisement reads: --

Ely Beet Sugar Factory. Men and Women wanted for Beet Campaign.

October to January.

8-hour shifts; good wages and working conditions; works canteen available.

Apply in person or by letter to British Sugar Corporation, Beet Sugar Factory, Ely.

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Deepening Fenland Floods Cause Widespread Disaster to Farmers.

No Harvest. A Heavy Blow to Food Supplies.

The Yorkshire Observer, Bradford, Friday, March the 21st, 1947.

By Our Own Reporter, Cambridge, Thursday.

Floods in the fenlands have caused an agriculture disaster which is bound to have most severe repercussions on Britain's food supplies.

Up to 40,000 acres, –perhaps even more, –of the richest land in the country, will have to lie fallow throughout the season. There will be no harvest at all on many of the farms.

Quite apart from this loss of potential crops, there are grim stories of winter wheat ruined, and of potatoes rotting in their clamps beneath the vast inland lakes, which flood water has formed, in many parts of the basin of the great Ouse.

Normally, the fertile black soil of the fenlands produces about one-twelfth of the sugar beet, and about a sixteenth of the potatoes grown in the country. In addition, there is a substantial wheat acreage which, it was hoped this year, would be increased to 57,000 in the Isle of Ely alone.

No harvest.

The worst havoc has been caused in the areas administered by the W A E C, the War Agricultural Executive Committee of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.

Making a restrained estimate today, Mr. E T Sykes, the Executive Officer of Cambridgeshire W A E C, said he feared there would be no crops at all from 12,000 acres of the arable land in his area.

This means a loss to the country of about 7,000 tons of potatoes, and up to 10,000 tons of sugar beet, which would probably have produced 1,400 tons of sugar.

In the Ely section, the loss is bound to be much heavier. The flood area is greater, and the ground is so much more closely cultivated, that its yield is normally 50 percent higher than in Cambridgeshire.

Rotting Clamps.

Mr. Arthur Norman, chairman of the Cambridgeshire branch of the National Farmers Union, pointed out another aspect.

“Thousands of tons of potatoes which farmers were holding in reserve, are rotting in their clamps,” he said. These are normally consumed in June and July. As many as possible have been salvaged and carted away to high ground, but the losses are bound to be heavy.

Mr. Norman, of Haddenham, considers this is one of the biggest disasters in the history of the Fenlands.

“All the pumping engines are flooded,” he said. “It is going to be weeks before we can hope to get this land clear of water and many more weeks before we can get the land fit for sowing.” Speaking of the salvage of cattle, feeding stuffs and tractors, Mr. Norman said it would have been impossible to recover anything at all from the flood areas if it had not been for concrete roads laid down by the W A E C, during the war.

Losing Battle.

All through the night, RAF beacons, arc lamps, hurricane lamps and a searchlight, turned the mile stretch of the sandbag defence line along the Ely to Kings Lynn Road into a blaze of light in the middle of the dark fens.

The thousand troops, prisoners-of-war, and Fenman fought on, to hold back the flood waters from the Hilgay Gap, but late last night, streams of water were already trickling under the emergency embankment and across the road down onto the threatened 20,000 acres. Smallholders and farmers moved the last of their possessions out of the threatened areas. The floodwaters continue to rise. Slight falls in river levels brought a gleam of hope to beleaguered residents in Britain's flooded valleys last night.

Photograph and caption below.

THE GRIM SCENE IN EAST ANGLIA

Water rushing through a gap 20 yards wide in the bank of the River Ouse, near Earith, Cambridgeshire. Troops and civilians worked all night in the beams of searchlights in a fruitless effort to fill the gap. Now a Bailey bridge, 160ft. long, is to be thrown across and then converted into a dam.

## The Grim Scene in East Anglia.

Water rushing through a gap 20 yards wide in the bank of the River Ouse, near Earith, Cambridgeshire, Troops and civilians worked all night in the beams of searchlights in the fruitless effort to fill the gap. Now a Bailey bridge, 160 feet long, is to be thrown across and then converted into a dam.

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Built Lynn Sugar Beet Factory.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, June the 25th, 1948.

Mr. H Willemstyn, chief technical officer of the British Sugar Corporation, has retired after a long period of outstandingly able service to the industry. He was one of the Dutch technologists who came to this country in 1912 to build the first beet factory at Cantley.

Born in Batavia, Mr Willemstyn was educated in Holland, finishing his studies at Wageningen University. He entered the sugar industry in 1904, and was appointed director of the Oud Gastel factory in 1911. This appointment started a long association with the late Mr. G P van Rossum, both in Holland and England.

Cantley was managed by Mr Willemstyn in 1913 and 1914, when it had to close down with the advent of the Great War. After the factory reopened, he acted as consultant.

In 1923, he reconstructed Kelham factory at Newark-on-Trent when Mr. van Rossum leased it from Home Grown Sugar Limited, and continued to act as advisor there until he took charge of the erection of the Ely factory in 1924. Then he became its general manager, retaining that position until 1940.

In the meantime, he was in charge of the building of Lynn beet sugar factory in 1927.

On the formation of British Sugar Corporation, Limited, in 1936, he was appointed one of its technical consultants, and in 1945 became its first chief technical officer.

***

The Detective Inspector Happened to be Passing.

The Newmarket Journal, Friday, February the 4th, 1949.

A father and two sons were fined, together with a lorry driver, when they appeared at the Newmarket, (Cambs) Magistrates Court on Tuesday, charged with stealing sugar beet from neighbouring beet growers.

Defendants were Arthur Edwards, age 45 years, and his two sons, Arthur Edwards and Maurice Roy Edwards, all of 135, Downfields, Soham, and Bertie Brown, Qua Fen Common, Soham.

They were charged with stealing one and a half tons of sugar beet, valued at £8, twelve shillings, and sixpence, the property of James Martin, and also with stealing three and a half tons of sugar beet, valued at £19, five shillings, the property of Bertie Pollard.

Red Lorry.

Mr. A H Wild, (Wild and Hewitson, Cambridge), who prosecuted on behalf of the police, told the Bench that it so happened that as Detective Inspector Foreacre, of Cambridge, saw, as he was travelling between Wicken and Soham in the evening, a red lorry at the side of the road being loaded with sugar beet. From what he heard later; he came to certain conclusions. James Martin, Fordham Road, Soham, said that when he had left, about 35 tons were stacked

up alongside his land. The following morning, he found that beet was missing, and estimated the amount taken at one and a half tons.

Bertie Pollard, Church Pit Farm, Brook Street, Soham, told the Bench how he found about half a seven-ton pile of beet missing.

John Edward Gillet, 60, Downfields, Soham, declared that while walking along the Wicken Road, he saw a red lorry pulled up alongside the heap of beet alongside Mr. Pollard's land.

Duncan Elsden, beet agent, and George B Flack, accounts clerk at the sugar beet factory, gave evidence, the latter witness saying that the total received from Edwards was 32 tons, 6 hundred weight, two quarters of dirty beet.

Reginald Lane, of Ely, beet receptionist at the Ely factory, told how one load from Edwards he found to be partly dirty and partly clean.

Detective Inspector Percy Foreacre, Headquarters, Cambridge, said that he was travelling between Soham and Wicken when he saw a red lorry being loaded with sugar beet. He saw Murice Edwards on that night, as defendant turned and faced the witness's car, and could be seen in the headlights.

All defendants denied in court that they had taken the beet, saying that on the evening in question, they were engaged in loading Edwards beet.

The three Edwards defendants were fined £5 each, and Brown £2.

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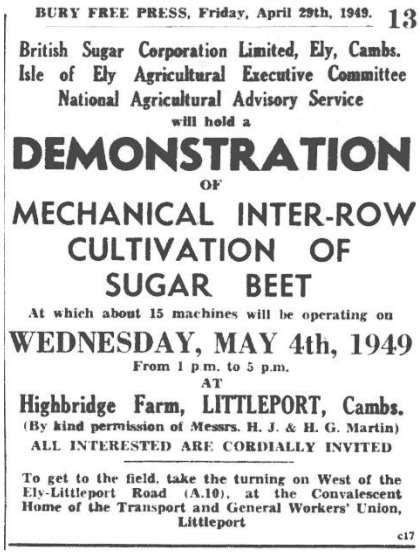
Public Notices.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, April the 29th, 1949.

Notice and caption.



BURY FREE PRESS, Friday, April 29th, 1949. 13

British Sugar Corporation Limited, Ely, Cambs.
Isle of Ely Agricultural Executive Committee
National Agricultural Advisory Service
will hold a

DEMONSTRATION
OF
MECHANICAL INTER-ROW CULTIVATION OF SUGAR BEET

At which about 15 machines will be operating on

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4th, 1949
From 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
AT
Highbridge Farm, LITTLEPORT, Cambs.
(By kind permission of Messrs. H. J. & H. G. Martin)
ALL INTERESTED ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

To get to the field, take the turning on West of the Ely-Littleport Road (A.10), at the Convalescent Home of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Littleport

c17

Caption reads:

British Sugar Corporation, Limited, Ely, Cambs.
Isle of Ely Agricultural Executive Committee.
National Agricultural Advisory Service, will hold a demonstration of Mechanical Inter-Row Cultivation of Sugar Beet, at which about 15 machines will be operating, on Wednesday, May the 4th, 1949.
From 1 pm to 5 pm at,
Highbridge Farm, Littleport, Cambs.
(By kind permission of Messrs. H J and H G Martin)
All interested are cordially invited.
To get to the field, take the turning on West of the Ely-Littleport Road (A10), at the Convalescent Home of the Transport and General Workers Union, Littleport.

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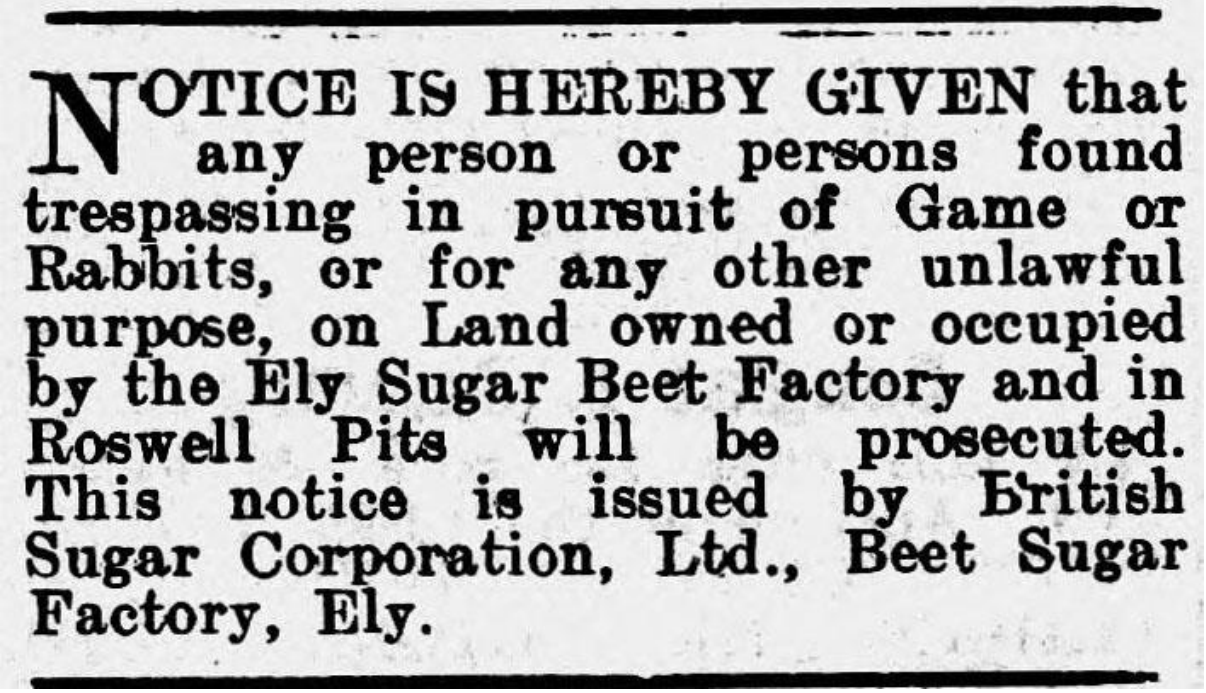
Public Notices.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 23rd, 1949.

Notice and caption.



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that any person or persons found trespassing in pursuit of Game or Rabbits, or for any other unlawful purpose, on Land owned or occupied by the Ely Sugar Beet Factory and in Roswell Pits will be prosecuted. This notice is issued by British Sugar Corporation, Ltd., Beet Sugar Factory, Ely.

Caption reads:

Notice is hereby given that any person or persons found trespassing in pursuit of Game or Rabbits, or for any other unlawful purpose, on land owned or occupied by the Ely Sugar Beet Factory and in Roswell Pits will be prosecuted. This notice is issued by British Sugar Corporation, Limited, Beet Sugar Factory, Ely.

***

Lighter Beet Crop is Confirmed.

The Peterborough and Northamptonshire Telegraph, Monday, October the 3rd, 1949.

Deliveries of sugar beet from Isle farms which passed over the weighbridges at the Ely factory on Thursday and Friday, preparatory to cutting operations, confirmed the view that the crop will be much lighter this year.

Average sugar content from inspections to date, give a figure of 16.4 percent, which is considered to be reasonably good, and while weather conditions have not favoured development of the roots, growers have been able to get among their crops earlier than usual for lifting purposes.

Good Progress.

In this direction, the drought has enabled them to make good progress, but a factory official emphasised the urgency of farmers maintaining deliveries at a sufficient rate, so that the campaign can be concluded as anticipated, by Christmas.

Field inspections and reports have prompted this decision, in view of the lighter crop which has suffered considerably from yellow virus and, which, consistent with the dry conditions, has reduced the tonnage considerably.

***

Safety Prizes for Sugar Factories.

The Lincolnshire Echo, Tuesday, October the 25th, 1949.

Sir Alan Saunders, chairman of British Sugar Corporation, visited Kelham, (Newark) sugar factory yesterday, to present the shield and money prizes, won in the corporation's Safety-First competition in its factories.

The shield and first prize of £25 went to Kelham factory; second prize £15 to Ely factory; and third prize £10 to Bardney factory.

Mr. W Swannack, Kelham factory manager, presided.

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The Passing Hour.

February the 23rd is the Day.

By Watchman.

The Cambridge Evening Press, Friday, January the 13th, 1950.

Speculation over the date of the General Election was ended on Wednesday, with the official announcement that polling day will be on Thursday, February the 23rd. This is a date that had been strongly tipped for some time, and it gives candidates approximately 6 weeks to get fighting fit.

Mention of the word “fighting", leads one to hope that the local campaigns will be contested in the clean manner that has always characterised them, at least in recent years. No candidate can resent hard blows at his policy, –they add to the zest of the election, –but personalities should not enter into it.

So far as the “Independent Press and Chronicle” is concerned, we shall endeavour to live up to the first word of our title, –to be independent, to give a fair show to all Parties.

Effect on the Price Review,

Farmers will now be concerned as to the effect on the election date, on the annual February review on farm produce prices.

The withdrawal of the feeding stuffs subsidy, and other production cost changes, imposed on negotiators for farming, the obligation of requiring that these have recognition in the prices fixed.

Numerous statements have indicated that the Treasury attitude is such, that there is a small likelihood of the demand being fully met, and that, for the first time in the lives of many of our younger farmers, they will be faced with a falling market.

Waiving the question of whether this is desirable in the national interest, such a prospect would hardly be popular with country folk.

## Is it a Pointer?

Mr Tom Williams, the Minister of Agriculture, in his New Year message to farmers and farmworkers, impressed the need for higher crop yields per acre through the use of fertilisers. This has tended to give greater substance to reports that, after all, the Treasury axe may not fall upon the fertiliser subsidy.

Not only would the withdrawal of the subsidy add still further to the producer's cost, and so prejudice review prospects, and a General Election appeal, but experience elsewhere, when this subsidy has been withdrawn, suggests that diminished production would ensue.

Progressive and efficient farmers in general, would probably recognise that decreased use of fertilisers would prove a boomerang, but figures recently quoted by Sir James Scott Watson indicate, that many producers are still using less fertiliser than are needful, to maximum profits. Subsidy withdrawal would probably worsen the position.

## Poorest Beet Campaign for Years.

Forecasts last autumn of a poor sugar beet crop, with low content, have been proved to be well founded. Results for the 2,600 growers who supply the Ely factory have been poorer than for many years in the campaign, which has just ended after a run of only 87 days, the shortest for a long time. Not only was the yield per acre of just over 8.3 tons low, but the sugar content of beet handled, average no more than 14.73 percent, the lowest for the factory in the history of the Corporation.

Beets received at the factory, which has now completed a quarter of a century of operations, totalled 244,721 tons, and from these, were manufactured over 29,000 tons of raw sugar, 17,000 tons of dried beet pulp, and 7,600 tons of molasses, as well as a substantial quantity of wet pulp.

The factory operated well throughout the season, and a high average daily slice was maintained. This, and the operation of the daily permit, now in its second year, meant that farmers and hauliers delivering beets, were generally able to get in and out of the factory with a minimum of delay.

On the best day, as many as 549 lorries were handled in the normal working hours. The season was one of freedom from serious deterioration, and the rapid rate of operation, enabled farmers to clear their beets within a very short time of lifting.

Effect of Drought and Virus Yellows.

There, the good side of the picture ends. The promising early seasonal prospects were ideal seed bed's, good and even germination, excellent" brairds", (to sprout or spring up from the ground, i.e.: germinate), and forward singling, unfortunately did not materialise in many instances.

Following a winter of less than normal rainfall, it soon became evident that the protracted drought, aphid attack, and virus yellows were soon to take their toll in the yellowing of the leaves, thus reducing ability to take advantage of the abundant sunshine. By September, a less than average crop was imminent, but indications suggested that sugar content might slightly compensate that deficiency.

However, with the advent of rain, secondary growth took place, and at the cost of the sugar yield, beets, to use a colloquialism, just, "grew on" themselves. Such is the woeful tale of the 1949 agricultural side, but farmers know that an experience such as this does not often happen, so once more, the future is looked forward to with confidence, in the knowledge that the crop which has stood the producer in good stead for so many seasons, will not let him down in future.

***

Sugar Beet Traffic by Rail.

The Leven, (East Fife) Mail, Wednesday, March the 15th, 1950.

In the season just concluded, 77,413 tons of sugar beet were conveyed by rail to the sugar beet factory at Cupar, Fife. Compared with last year, this represents an increase of 16,680 tons.

In addition to the crop grown in Scotland, a considerable portion of the North of England yield is dealt with at the Cupar factory, and from the opening of the season on the 10th of October, 1949, until slicing operations ceased at the end of the year, 8,385 railway wagons were used for the carriage of the sugar beet to the factory.

Because of heavy concentration on the factory, the movement of traffic is regulated by permit. On arrival at Cupar, the sugar beet is discharged from the railway vehicles by a flushing action, powerful water jets being employed for this purpose.

***

Beet May be Record Crop.

Disease Below Average.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, September the 15th, 1950.

With the sugar beet campaign about to start, factory managers of the British Sugar Corporation are anticipating very heavy yields. Both at Bury and at Ely, prospects are such that records may be broken.

The campaign for the Bury factory starts on Wednesday the 20th, with slicing beginning about five days later. Thanks to the heavier rainfalls throughout the growing season, a bumper crop is anticipated, and the sugar content is described as being good for the time of year.

Handling this crop from some 44,000 acres, will last until towards the end of January.

At the Ely factory, they are thinking of yields that may well constitute a record from the 24,000 acres they serve. The weights of field samples at present being drawn, are reported as the heaviest for the time of year for many seasons.

Less Disease.

Both factories say that the virus yellows disease is much less evident than last year, and is well below average. The absence of the disease is in the main due to unfavourable conditions for the spread of the greenfly, which is the most important carrier, and to some extent its numbers may have been reduced by the earlier clearing up in the spring, of mangold clamps, in which the pests can over winter.

In view of the very large tonnage of sugar beet to be handled, the earliest possible start is being made to afford growers every opportunity of keeping up to date with their early deliveries, and shortening what must be a long campaign, reducing by every possible means, the risk of losses due to frost, and other seasonal conditions.

***

The Passing Hour.

By Watchman.

Bumper Sugar Beet Crop.

The Cambridge Independent Press and Chronicle, Friday, September the 22nd, 1950.

The sugar beet harvest in Cambridgeshire is expected to give the highest yield per acre obtained since the end of the recent war. In some places, beets have “bolted,” which tends to give a reduction in sugar content, but tests carried out show a satisfactory sugar content.

Reason for the bumper beet crop is the rainy weather, which has proved such an obstacle to the corn harvest. The Peterborough factory opened on Tuesday, and the Ely factory yesterday; others in this area are expected to open soon.

Sugar Beet Harvesting Problem.

Two machines which, it is claimed, provide the complete answer to the sugar beet harvesting problem, are to be demonstrated at Witchford Aerodrome, near Ely, on October the 4th and 5th.

They are the “Peter Standen” sugar beet harvester, and beet top collector and loader.

Proto-types of these machines were extensively tried out and developed during the 1948-1949 beet seasons. The beet harvester was entered in the international beet trials, at Ramsey, where it created great interest amongst the beet growers of this country, and the continent. It

was also entered for the Royal Agricultural Society of England's silver medal, at the Royal show at Oxford this year, and the award was deferred, pending official tests which are being carried out this season.

The whole of the production of the machines for1950 was sold out many months ago.

Due to the difficulty in obtaining sufficient labour for the unpleasant task of lifting and topping sugar beet, and the high cost involved, the need of an efficient machine for the harvesting of this crop has been evident for some time.

Patent numbers and illustrations below.

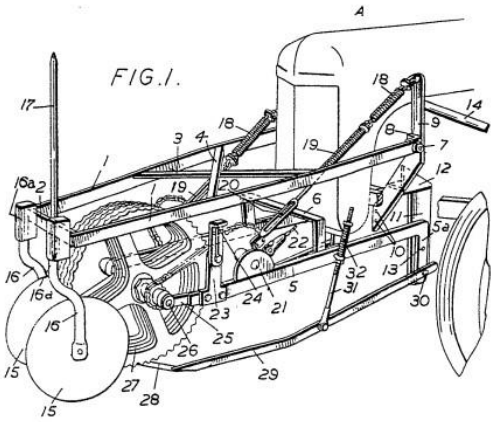
**PATENT SPECIFICATION** **657,174**

*Date of filing Complete Specification: Jan. 17, 1950.*
*Application Date: Feb. 2, 1949. No. 2870/49.*
*Complete Specification Published: Sept. 12, 1951.*

Index at acceptance:—Class 6(iii), C1.

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

Improvements relating to the Harvesting of Beet and like Root Crops




**PATENT SPECIFICATION** **662,804**

*Date of filing Complete Specification: Jan. 17, 1950.*
*Application Date: May 30, 1949. No. 14438/49.*
*Complete Specification Published: Dec. 12, 1951.*

Index at Acceptance:—Class 6(iii), C1.

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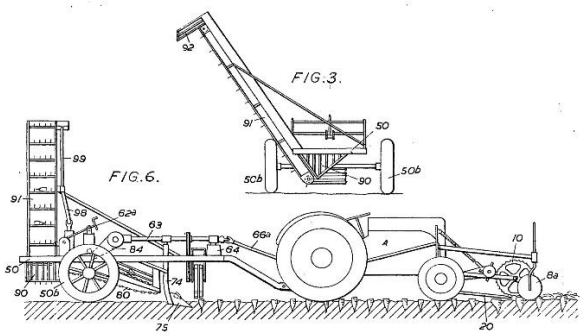
Improvements relating to the Harvesting of Beet and like Root Crops.

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Harvesting of Beet.

Following on from the previous report.

Machines Demonstrated in Cambs.

The Spalding Mercury and Guardian, Friday, October the 13th, 1950.

A demonstration of the Peter Standen sugar beet harvester, and the Peter Standen sugar beet top collector and loader, was given by Messrs. A Standen and Sons, Limited, of Hereward Works, Lynn Rd, Ely, Cambs, at Witchford Aerodrome, near Ely, last week.

The soil was heavy loam, and on one side of the four-acre plot of beet there was a fair quantity of stones. The machines, however, worked through the two days in an extremely satisfactory manner, and farmers were unanimous that the topping of the beet was fully equal to the best

hand topping. The soil was rather wet on the first day on the account of recent heavy rains, but the cleaning device on the beet harvester removed a great deal of the dirt that was adhering to the roots and, after passing through the machine, beets were clean enough to send direct to the Ely sugar beet factory without further weathering.

Rather more than 2,000 people visited the demonstration during the two days, including Major Legge Bourke, MP for the Isle of Ely, several senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, a number of the firm's foreign agents, and agents and farmers from Ireland and Scotland. All agreed that the machines put up a very fine performance, and a large number of orders were taken for delivery in 1951, the firm's production for this season having been sold out.

The beet harvester worked throughout the whole of the two days without an involuntary stoppage of any description, and the top collector and loader worked at arranged intervals each day with similar smoothness.

***

They Will Get no Day Off for Months.

By Clifford Selly.

The Daily Herald, Wednesday, November the 15th, 1950.

Peter Garner, Kenneth Thorne, Bill Cooper, Jack Peacock and 480 other workers at Ely, in the Fens, won't be at home on Christmas Day. They'll be busy making sugar. They have been hard at it since September, –eight-hour shifts, round the clock, seven days a week, –and they won't get a day off until February, when the job is done.

That's the way it is for the 9,000 men in Britain's eighteen sugar beet factories. The yearly campaign, to extract vital sugar from the Mangold-like beet, is a race against time, and the weather.

Stripped to their vests, they tend the clanking, throbbing machines, amidst the steaming, earthy, sweet stench of the beet, –" You get used to it after a few days," they told me.

On the Green.

From the Fenland farms, where men and women are cutting the roots in the crisp November fields, long queues of lorries, railway trucks, and river barges bring a steady stream of beet to feed the hungry machines and vats.

In his office at Ely, works manager Isaac Slatopolsky, Glasgow educated chemist, watches three green lights on the wall. They are the pulse of the factory.

If all three are shining, that means the slicing knives are working at full blast. Two mean steady output; one or none means trouble.

And occasionally, the green lights do fade, for the strain on men and machines is fierce. A year's work is achieved in five months.

This year, the pressure is greater than ever. Sun and rain have combined to produce a record crop of beet.

By February, five million tons will have poured through the factories to give 600,000 tons of sugar, –more than a year's supply for the present 8-ounce domestic ration. But, of course, nearly another one and a half million tons are needed for jam, sweets, confectionery etc.

## Beet to Sugar.

Each day at Ely, as swirling water-chutes carry 3,000 tons of beet into the factory, 400 tons of bagged sugar are loaded into waiting railway trucks at the other side.

It takes 18 hours to extract sugar from the muddy, cream coloured root of the beet. Water is the key to the process: water which, as the beet is first squeezed, and then stewed in the machines and vats, becomes a juice rich in sugar content; water which is finally distilled away to leave behind the golden sugar crystals.

Never ceasing, the tide of sugar bearing juice, growing richer at each stage, sweeps through the humid factory.

Past the high platform, like a ship's engine-room, where perspiring Kenneth Thorne operates the controls, which put the first squeeze on the beet slices.

Past the diffusion battery, where burly Peter Garner and his eleven men control the flow of juice and beet into the copper-lined stewing vats.

Past the heavy filter presses, where bespeckled Bill Cooper and his team collect the impurities from the juice.

Past the giant boiling pans, into the cool of the loading shed, where Jack Peacock swings the two-and three-quarter hundredweight sacks of sugar from his broad shoulders, into the waiting trucks at the rate of more than 120 an hour.

The beet pulp, which remains, is still rich in nutrients, and when it is dried off, the farmers buy it back eagerly for cattle fodder.

## Rich…Sweet.

Many Polish and Irish workers come to the factory for the campaign. Only half the staff is permanent, and there is no longer a pool of casual local labour.

In the loading shed, I lifted a handful of the golden-brown crystals flowing down the chute. They tasted rich and sweet on the tongue, but there was a suspicion of earthy flavour of the beet.

For Ely is one of the six factories, which do not completely refine the sugar into the white crystals, which the housewife knows.

From Ely, the sugar goes to the Tate and Lyle refineries to be made ready for the table. That was one of the arrangements made by the Baldwin Government when it set up the sugar-beet monopoly in 1936.

The then tottering sugar-beet companies were forced to amalgamate into the Government supervised and subsidised, British Sugar Corporation.

But apart from £750,000, held by the Treasury, the £5 million capital of the monopoly was placed in private hands. Tate and Lyle and the Prudential are two of the biggest shareholders.

Since 1936, the industry has enjoyed a subsidy to help meet expenses, and provide a steady 4 and a half percent for the shareholders, –except for two years at 4 percent.

It's Vital.

Next month, the 1936 Act, which set up the Corporation expires, and the Government must consider its future. Clearly it is time to stop subsidising these private shareholders at the taxpayers' expense. Moreover, the present setup protects the cane-sugar refiners, and prevents the sugar beet factories working to their full capacity.

The sugar-beet industry must develop and prosper. It is vital to the farmer and the housewife.

The Government intends to take the eighteen factories into public ownership, so that they can compete with the private refiners on a fair footing.

And the men who give up Christmas with their families to produce sugar for the nation welcome the move.

***

Webb's Mystery Sugar Surplus Could Mean—

Goodbye to Sugar Rationing.

By R. E. Hudson.

The Fifeshire Advertiser, Saturday, March the 3rd, 1951.

Now for the great Sugar mystery! A few days ago, Food Minister, Maurice Webb, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, said that beginning in April, there would be six bonuses of sugar of 1 pound, per ration book, per month.

Good news for the housewives? Undoubtedly. The little extra will make life much sweeter. But the food Minister's subsequent remark, that these improvements were as such as could be made this year, is puzzling men in the sugar trade.

Reason is, that they estimate that Britain will have a **surplus** of 380,000 tons of Empire sugar this year.

Latest figures available to the trade, show that 1,880,000 tons of cane sugar can be expected from the British West Indies, Australia, Fiji, Mauritius, and Natal.

In addition, some 700,000 tons of beet sugar has been harvested here at home, making a total of 2,580,000 tons for the year.

Now, even including Mr Webb's bonuses, consumption on the present ten-ounce ration will only total 2,200,000 tons, –leaving the 380,000-ton surplus. Presumably a fraction of this, (about 10,000), will be absorbed by the bigger forthcoming sweets ration, but a vast tonnage remains.

What will Mr Webb do with his surplus? It **could,** go to increase the domestic sugar ration. On the assumption that the population of Britain remains at 50 million, this surplus represents an extra ration of about 5 and a quarter ounce, per week, per head.

It **could,** in fact mean an end to sugar rationing altogether, for as doctor Edith Summerskill pointed out when she was Parliamentary Secretary to the Food Ministry, “it would not be prudent to de-ration sugar, unless we had available 2,500,000 tons a year.”

Well, we have more than 80,000 tons more than this, thanks to the surplus of 380,000 tons.

To use this surplus to increase the ration would undoubtedly be an embarrassment to the Government, in so far as, it would increase the cost of food subsidies, now running at more than £400,000,000, by over £10,000,000 annually.

Moreover, it would put Mr Webb in a further dilemma. Manufacturing users of sugar pay 7 pence per pound, whereas domestic users pay only five pence per pound. If, therefore, the ration is increased to any great extent, Mr Webb, –to avoid a possible black market, –would either have to lower the price of manufacturing sugar, (which would mean increasing the subsidy), or raise the price of household sugar. The latter step would again put up the cost of living.

Does this mean that the food minister cannot raise the ration because of an accounting procedure?

Hitherto, the housewife has been told repeatedly, that only the dollar question has prevented the Government from buying more sugar to swell the domestic ration. Yet this giant surplus has been possible without the aid of dollars, thanks mainly to free enterprise development of Empire sugar producing countries.

It may be argued that the surplus has been earmarked for export. If so, this is in direct contravention of the pledge made to the housewife. At the present time, Britain is exporting over 700,000 tons of refined sugar a year. This sugar is bought in its raw state from dollar areas such as Cuba. Refined, it is sent to all parts of the world, and earns us more than £35,000,000 annually.

But there is a limit to world demand, –and a shortage of raw (dollar) sugar, –so it may be assumed that the Government’s sugar export plan is working to capacity.

Which makes the mystery of the surplus even greater.

If, in fact, the Government intends to step up sugar exports, some explanation is necessary. The housewives of Britain have a right to know the facts.

Speak up, Mr Webb, before the housewives feel they have been cheated!

***

Public Notices. --Residential.

Unfurnished House.

The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, Friday, July the 27th, 1951.

Request reads:

Unfurnished house, Flat or Rooms urgently wanted. Spalding or surrounding district—Replies to Simon Carves, Limited, c/o British Sugar Corporation, Ely, Cambs.

UNFURNISHED HOUSE, Flat or Rooms urgently wanted, Spalding or surrounding district.—Replies to Simon Carves Ltd., c/o British Sugar Corporation, Ely, Cambs.

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Situations Vacant.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 14th, 1951.

Advertisement for vacancies reads:

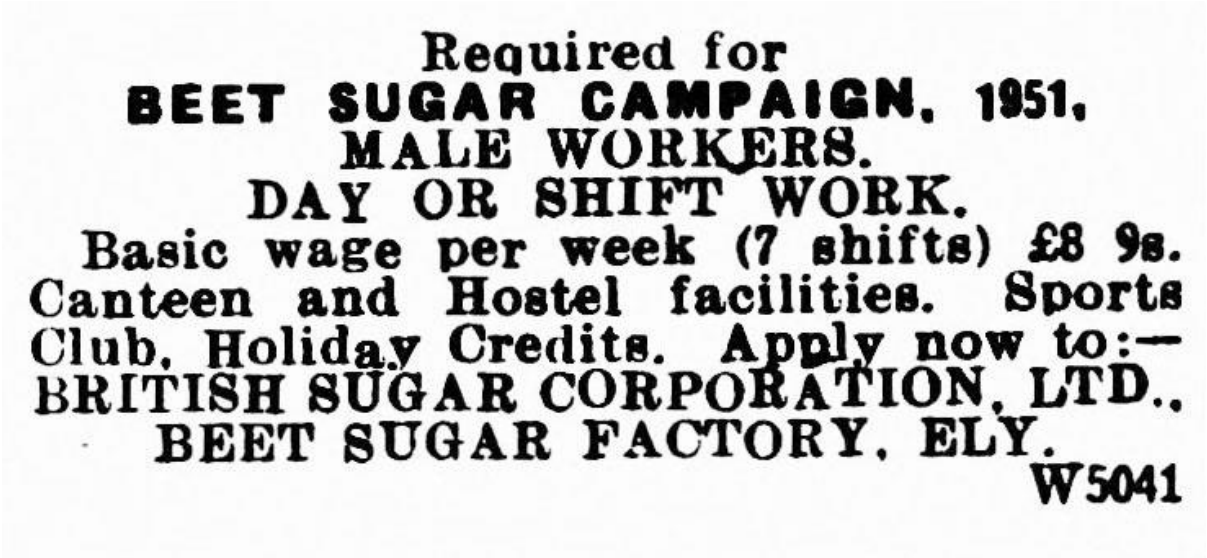
Required for Beet Sugar Campaign, 1951. Male Workers. Day or shift work.

Basic wage per week, (7 shifts), £8, 9 shillings. Canteen and Hostel facilities.

Sports Club, Holiday Credits.

Apply now to: --British Sugar Corporation, Limited.

Beet Sugar Factory, Ely.


Required for
BEET SUGAR CAMPAIGN, 1951.
MALE WORKERS.
DAY OR SHIFT WORK.
Basic wage per week (7 shifts) £8 9s.
Canteen and Hostel facilities. Sports Club, Holiday Credits. Apply now to:—
BRITISH SUGAR CORPORATION, LTD.,
BEET SUGAR FACTORY, ELY.
W5041

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Home Again Soon.

The Peterborough and Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph, Wednesday, June the 11th, 1952.

After 56 years as a waterman, Mr Ben Lee is on his way to Stanground, Peterborough, to spend his retirement moored in a houseboat near the house where he was born 64 years ago. But due to road widening operations at Upwell, he has been delayed because the operations have caused a blockage in the Welle Creek.

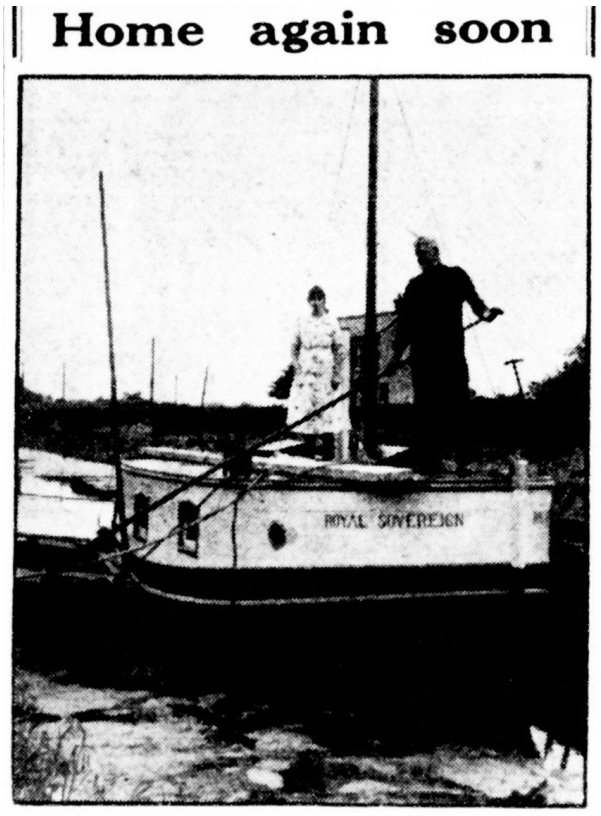
Mr. Lee, seen in this picture on his boat at Upwell, has recently been in charge of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory barges. He is classed as Foreman Skipper Lee, and has seen 26 years' service with water transport at Ely factory.

He comes from a long line of Lee's who have owned and navigated barges throughout the Fens for generations, sailing their craft on rivers around Northampton, Peterborough, Wisbech, March, Ramsey, Chatteris, Lynn, Huntingdon and Cambridge.

Even when his day as a waterman was done, he stayed afloat, --on the 15-ton houseboat, Royal Sovereign, with its cabin walls of polished mahogany, brass ornaments and fittings, and cooking stove.

As for the house in which he was born, Ben says he's prepared to look at it through the porthole, but he certainly will not leave his houseboat.

The photograph below shows Ben on his house boat, Royal Sovereign.

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Breach “Narrowly Averted” at Beet Factory.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, July the 18th, 1952.

A breach in the most recent settling pond of the Ely sugar factory was narrowly averted during the last sugar beet campaign; it was disclosed in minutes presented at the meeting of the great Ouse River Board on Thursday.

The engineer, (Mr. W E Doran), reported to the Internal Drainage Districts Committee that if a breach had occurred, the liquid from the pond would have flooded agricultural land in the Upper Padnal District.

That was a serious matter, particularly as the liquid was known to contain a large percentage of sugar beet eelworm, and the Internal Board were very concerned about it. They had asked him to act on their behalf in dealing with the matter at the time, and he had done so.

“Wrong material.”

Recent investigation had revealed that the bank was constructed of the wrong material and was of insufficient cross section. The Engineer had interviewed representatives of the Corporation, and they had asked him to act as their consultant in the preparation of a scheme for improving the bank of the settling pond, and to carry out the necessary work.

There was approximately half a mile of bank to be constructed, and this would have to be completed in a period of two months, in preparation for the coming winter. The Engineer said that he had men available for the work.

The Committee resolved that the Engineer be authorised to prepare a scheme on behalf of the British Sugar Corporation, for the improvement of the bank of their settling pond, and to carry out the work at the cost of the Corporation, and subject to the payment of the usual fees and expenses.

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British Sugar Corporation Limited.

Extracts from the address of Sir Alan Saunders, O.B.E., Chairman, circulated with the Accounts for the year ended, 31st of March, 1953.

The Newmarket Journal, Wednesday, July the 29th, 1953.

The season under review produced the fifth highest crop in the history of the industry, both in regard to the tonnage of beet delivered and the average yield per acre.

The total tonnage of sugar beet received at the factories was 4,235,908 tons, compared with 4,533,512 tons in the previous season, and a 10-year average of 4,064,324 tons. The average yield per acre was 10.73 tons, or half a ton more than the ten-year average of 10.12 tons.

The crop was grown by 39,568 growers, on 394,728 acres, an average of practically 10 acres per grower.

The long-term factory reconstruction programme of the Corporation progressed as planned in spite of supply difficulties, and in the year under review, capital expenditure amounted to £1,357,000.

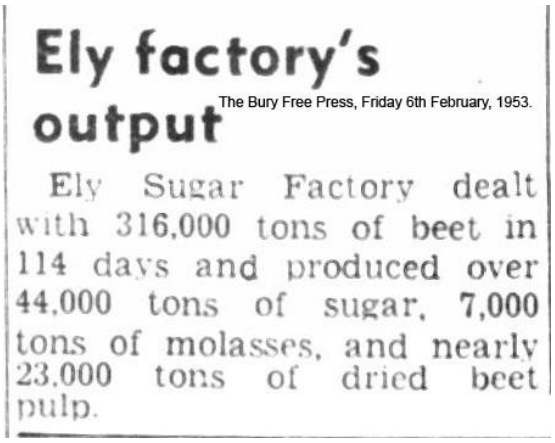
The regular increase in factory capacity is being maintained, and the average daily tonnage of beets sliced was 41,115 tons compared with last year's record of 40,552 tons. In the last three years, our total factory capacity has been increased by over 2,300 tons per day, the equivalent of one additional factory.

329,737 tons of white sugar, and 260,823 tons of raw, were produced from the beet crop, a total of 590,560 tons, the third highest in the history of the Corporation.

Our production of sugar beet pulp, an attractive carbohydrate food for stock, was 278,082 tons. We also produced 184,060 tons of molasses.

At our Ely factory, an experiment was successful in exporting surplus power to the British Electricity Authority. Although the trial was on a comparatively small scale, it may well be that the future will see a considerable development of this matter, to the national advantage.

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted at the Seventeenth Annual Ordinary Meeting, held at 134, Piccadilly, London, W1, on the 21st of July 1953.



**Ely factory's output**

The Bury Free Press, Friday 6th February, 1953.

Ely Sugar Factory dealt with 316,000 tons of beet in 114 days and produced over 44,000 tons of sugar, 7,000 tons of molasses, and nearly 23,000 tons of dried beet pulp.

The adjacent screen clipping appeared in the Bury Free Press, Friday, February the 6th, 1953, and reads: Ely Sugar Factory dealt with 316,000 tons of beet in 114 days, and produced over 44,000 tons of sugar, 7,000 tons of molasses, and nearly 23,000 tons of dried beet pulp.

***

Death of Authority on the Fens.

The Lynn News and Advertiser, Tuesday, December the 8th, 1953.

Major Gordon Edward Fowler, well remembered in West Norfolk and the Fens as an antiquarian and an executive at Ely beet sugar factory, has died at Ryde, Isle of Wight. He was 67, and unmarried and had been struck by an incurable disease.

Educated at Kingston-upon-Thames, Major Fowler worked on a New Zealand sheep station when he was 16, going from there to Canada to work as smallholder, lumberman, cowboy, policeman, and cattleman.

After a time as a civil engineer in Africa, he returned to England as a schoolmaster, giving up this work for employment with Courtaulds, Limited, and later the British Sugar Corporation.

At Ely Factory.

This took him to the factory at Ely where he was water transport manager and assistant agriculturist.

He served on many organisations including the Isle County Council and Ely Urban Council, and during the war was group officer of the Observer Corps in the Fens. In the First World War he had served with the Royal Artillery in France and Italy.

In his day he had played hockey for Hampshire, Surrey and Cornwall, and been a member of the British International Selection Committee.

But his chief sporting interest was in small boat sailing and for 40 years was captain of the dinghy class of Seaview Yacht Club. In 1924 and 1928 he represented Britain in the single-handed sailing races in the Olympics.

Antiquarian.

He achieved a great reputation in the Fens as an antiquarian and archaeologist, and this year published fresh conclusions, on the loss of King John's jewels, in the Wash.

These conclusions suggested the incident occurred almost in Wisbech itself.

***

Ely Beet Factory Shatters all Previous Records.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Saturday, February the 6th, 1954.

All past records have been shattered by the Ely Sugar Factory in a very successful campaign which has just ended.

The factory dealt with a total of 368,000 tons of beet and the nearest comparable figure to this is the 370,000 tons received in 1950-1951, but in that year, the factory took nearly three weeks longer to complete its task, and sliced 400 tons a day less than in 1953-1954.

Sugar production at 53,000 tons was easily an all-time record, and dried pulp and molasses production amounted to 26,000 tons and 5,800 tons respectively.

Conditions for lifting and delivery of beets to the factory were almost ideal throughout the campaign period, and at no time did the factory experience any difficulty with deteriorated beets.

There was some trouble with seeded beets early in the season, but this disappeared once the early sown crops were out of the way.

The new elevated roadway, (see drawing below), proved a great boon to growers and hauliers who had equipped themselves with tipping lorries, and on some days of the campaign 25 percent of the road beets were delivered in this way, the lorries running in and out of the factory yard without any waiting at all. It is expected that a great many more farmers will avail themselves of these new facilities next season.

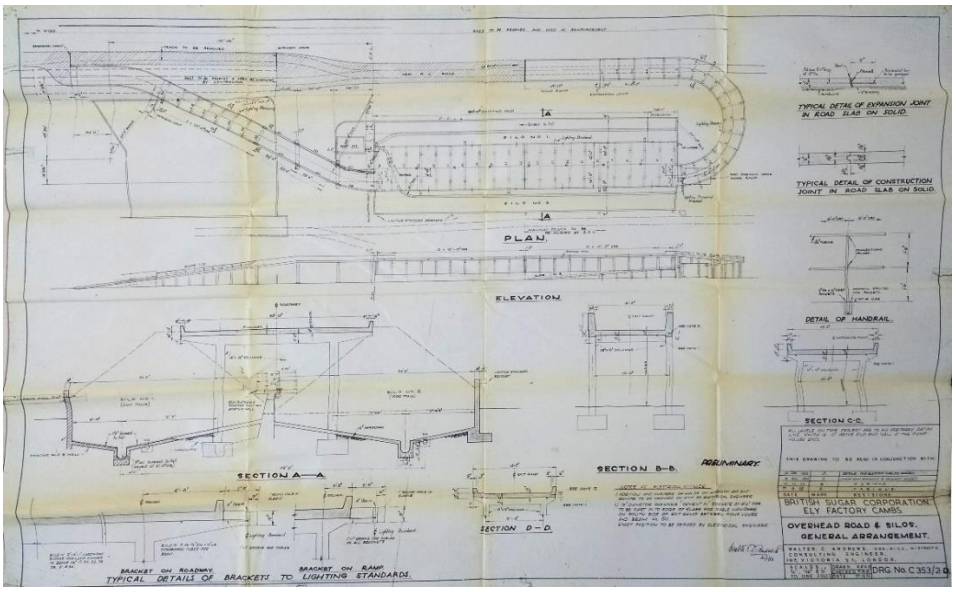
For the majority of growers, and particularly those in the highland areas, the season has been a very good one indeed.

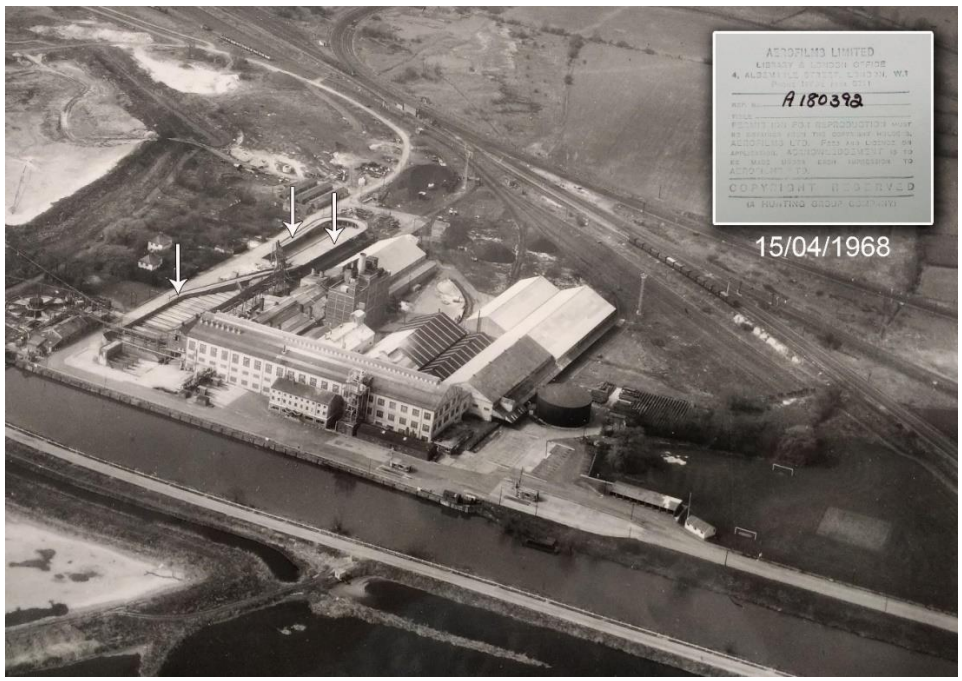
Average sugar content of 15.76 percent was below last year, but the yield per acre was 13 tons, another all-time record.

There has been an important new development this year which is worth recording.

The factory is now supplying electricity to the grid during the operating season, and during the last campaign over 600,000 units were passed on to the common pool.

Below is a copy of the drawings for the construction of the overhead road, KDT11/SE/1512, and next is the position of the overhead road in the Aero film photograph.

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British Sugar Corporation Limited.

A Year of Records.

The Newmarket Journal, Wednesday, August the 4th, 1954.

In 1953, the weather was almost ideal for this industry. Sugar beet growers and the home-grown sugar factories broke one record after another. The quantities of beet delivered to the factories and of sugar produced were the highest in the history of the industry. The average yield per acre was also a record. Chart 1 shows the remarkable increase in yield over the past seven years.

Freedom from disease, and continuously favourable harvesting weather were probably the most significant factors in the record results, but full credit must also be given to growers for the higher standard of cultivation now attained.

The yield of sugar beet per crop per acre, --13.11 tons, --surpassed the previous highest, in 1950, by 0.3 of a ton. The total tonnage delivered to the factories was 5,275,159. The production of sugar beet pulp, an attractive stock feed, was 321,018 tons.

Our six heaviest crops to date have been produced in the last eight years, and a comparison of the yield per acre for the past five seasons, (11.55 tons), with that of the immediately preceding five years, (9.47 tons), shows an increase of nearly 22 percent.

Since I announced in 1950, the long-term proposals for re-equipment and modernization of the Corporation's 18 factories, involving an expenditure of between £9,000,000 and £10,000,000, the work has gone forward satisfactorily in accordance with the plans laid down; and in fact, is expected to be completed during the present financial year.

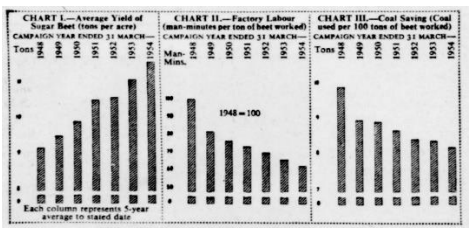
Our labour productivity has again been increased by almost 5 percent, and our campaign casual labour has again been reduced. Chart 2 shows campaign labour each year during the past seven years, as a percentage of the 1948 labour figures.

In chart 3 are given the comparative figures of coal consumption, which show the great progress made over the past seven years in coal economies.

The record tonnage of sugar produced during the beet campaign was 748,935 tons, 464,730 tons of which was white sugar and 284,205 tons raw sugar.

The above are extracts from the circulated address of Sir Alan Saunders, O.B.E., Chairman. The Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st of March, 1954, were unanimously adopted at the Eighteenth Annual Ordinary Meeting, held at 134, Piccadilly, London, W1, on the 27th of July, 1954.

Charts 1,2 and 3 below.

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Killed When Excavator Collapsed.

Man Pinned Face Downwards.

The Cambridge Daily News, Saturday, September the 18th, 1954.

A Great Ouse River Board excavator driver, Maurice William Rowell, (33), of 8, Hereward Street, Ely, was killed yesterday morning when his excavator collapsed onto its side.

Rowell was on temporary loan to the Ely Beet Sugar Factory where he was engaged in moving 100 tons of lime for transport to Stonea.

Mr. Colin Boston, a haulage contractor, of March, having taken one load to Stonea, had positioned his lorry for a second load.

One grab load had already been tipped into the vehicle and a second was being prepared when Mr Boston heard a snapping sound, and saw that the excavator had toppled over. Mr. Rowell was pinned face downwards underneath part of the cab wall.

Realising he could do nothing single-handed, Mr. Boston spread the alarm. A qualified nurse at the factory, Sicily Rivett, of Chatteris, raced to the scene, but her efforts to release Rowell's face were unsuccessful.

Primary cause of death was stated to be asphyxia.

An inquest will be held on Monday.

***

Representation at Sugar Factories.

Isle National Farmers Union Want Men of More Experience.

The Peterborough Citizen & Advertiser, February the 11th, 1955.

Much concern regarding high dirt tares, and consequent poor returns from sugar beet crops, was expressed at a meeting of the Isle of Ely branch of the National Farmers Union at March on Monday, at which Mr. J H Green presided.

Mr. W R Vye supported a resolution from the Ely branch, calling for the reorganisation of grower's representatives at beet sugar factories, and Mr. L C Giddens expressed the view that it was high time that the whole system was investigated.

Alderman A S Rickwood said that sugar beet was an important and expensive crop, and he did not think that casual workers were sufficiently experienced to look after growers' interests.

Mr. A S Poole said that it was impossible nowadays to place a value on a heap of sugar beet, since a grower's estimate of a consignment could be £12 to £14 out.

Mr. F W Deptford asked for details of the amount of sugar received and paid for by the British Sugar Corporation.

Mr. E Mortimer Rose, NFU Supervisor at the Ely factory, gave details of the type of applicants for the position of grower's representative at beet factories, and mentioned the scale of wages.

On the proposition of Mr. W R Vye, seconded by Mr. C J E S Fendick, it was unanimously agreed that the NFU headquarters should be asked to secure better terms of employment for assistant growers' representatives at beet factories, which would lead to the recruitment of more experienced personnel.

A discussion ensued regarding the chief growers' representatives at factories and it was agreed to ask the opinion of all local branches on the matter.

Lorry Weights.

It was agreed to refer to the NFU Transport Committee, the difficulties experienced by growers in distributing the correct weights on the back axles of lorries.

The subject arose from a communication from the Ely branch, which asked for amendments to legislation, since it was virtually impossible for a grower to know exactly what weight was situated at the front of the lorry, and what weight was on the back axle.

It was unanimously agreed that if suitable arrangements could be made, the branch would hold its county harvest festival service at Ely Cathedral during October.

It was learned that the possibility of such a service being televised or broadcast was being considered at a high level.

Overhead Roadway.

Mr. E Mortimer Rose said, that the NFU Sugar Beet Committee had accepted the branches urgent request for an overhead roadway to be constructed at the Peterborough Sugar factory to facilitate the reception of beets and to obviate the long waiting times now experience with consignments. He mentioned that plans had reached the drawing-board stage.

INVEST YOUR MONEY IN A PETER STANDEN SUGAR BEET HARVESTER
BUY NOW and SAVE £16 15/-
ON A "JUNIOR" HARVESTER (ELEVATOR MODEL)
*5% OUT OF SEASON DISCOUNT FOR PAYMENT FEB 1st—MAR 31st
THIS DISCOUNT represents a cash saving on any of the Standen range of sugar beet harvesters. IT IS A SOLID INVESTMENT TO TAKE A STANDEN HARVESTER INTO PARTNERSHIP NOW.
Full details from:
F. A. STANDEN & SON, Ltd
LIMITED
STANPOINT WORKS, ST. IVES, HUNTS. Phones: St. Ives 3371/2/3
HEREWARD WORKS, ELY, CAMBS. Phones: Ely 2871/2
KING'S DYKE WORKS, WHITTLESEY, CAMBS. Phones: Whittlesey 3303/4/5
NORTH END, WISBECH, CAMBS. Phones: Wisbech 105/6

Alderman A S Rickwood referred to major improvements at other beet factories and said he did not see why the Peterborough factory should lag behind in this respect.

It was proposed by Alderman Rickwood, seconded by Mr. E H Morris, and unanimously agreed that every endeavour should be made to have the fly-over bridge constructed in time for the 1955-56 season.

An advertisement for a Peter Standen Junior Sugar Beet Harvester, Elevator Model.

***

61 Majority for Sugar Bill.

Measure Will Help Producers.

The Scotsman, Friday, November the 11th, 1955.

The Government's Sugar Bill was given a Second Reading in the Commons last night by 193 votes to 132, a government majority of 61. Mr Heathcoat Amory, Minister of Agriculture, who introduced the Bill, explained that it would continue to help producers at home and in the Commonwealth. No increase in the price of sugar was anticipated.

Mr Heathcoat Amory, Minister of Agriculture, moved the Second Reading of the Bill, which, he said, proposed to put an end to State trading in sugar, and to give importers and traders as big a measure of freedom as possible, compatible with the Government's responsibilities under the International Sugar Agreement and the Agriculture Act of 1947.

The Minister said there was now no difference between the opinion of the Government and the Opposition on the importance of supporting the sugar beet industry at home, or of supporting the sugar cane industries in the Commonwealth.

"We have no intention to undo any of the work in the past. The purpose is to provide a legislative framework within which our home-grown sugar industry and the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement can be integrated."

The object was to facilitate the opening of the London terminal sugar market, and the recovery by London of its old pre-eminence as a centre of the international sugar trade.

At present, we consumed about 2,500,000 tons of raw sugar a year. Of that, 1,568,000 tons came under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, and between 600,000 and 700,000 tons came from our own sugar production.

Under the Bill, the averaging of price would continue to be necessary. The agent for making arrangements would be a small sugar board, composed of a chairman and not more than four members.

These arrangements would not mean any higher charge for sugar. They would carry out in a different way the present price of averaging system operated by his department.

It was not proposed to interfere in any way with the existing structure of the British Sugar Corporation.

Mr. Willey, (Labour, Sunderland, North) a former Parliamentary Secretary to the food minister, for the Opposition, said it was "absolute nonsense" to talk about free enterprise in sugar marketing.

In one clause of the Bill, the Government was asking for full powers of price control, and it also wanted full powers of allocations and import and export controls.

"When it was decided to protect and support the sugar beet industry," said Mr. Willey, "Mr. Charles Lyle, said that he intended to go into sugar beet also, for my own purpose, and to take my share of the plunder."

He carried out his intentions. In fact, today, Tate and Lyle had a very substantial shareholding in the Sugar corporation.

Whatever efficiency test was applied to the British Sugar Corporation, it would show that it had a remarkable record. The Government should recognise reality and make the corporation a proper public utility.

## Absolute Monopoly.

Mr Willey said there was another important reason why the industry should be brought under public ownership. “Sugar refining is an absolute monopoly. Not only are prices fixed, but the refiners and the British Sugar Corporation carve up the country, and have their own distributing areas within which they have exclusive market rights. “

Refiners should not have a substantial shareholding within the corporation, with whom they agreed to divide their respective interests.

“It is quite unjustifiable. It is only done to appease a few clamorous backbenchers, and to ensure that a very limited interest continues to get a rake-off from a nationalised industry without contributing anything.”

Major Legge-Bourke, (Conservative, Isle of Ely) complained of a remark by Mr. Willey concerning Sir Thomas Dugdale, (Conservative, Richmond, Yorkshire) the previous Minister of Agriculture, that “his chair had been whipped from under him.” That was a cheap remark, said Major Legge-Bourke.

Mr Shinwell, (Labour, Easington), Do not be so mealy-mouthed. This is not a tea party with a dear vicar in the chair.

Major Legge-Bourke, –Mr. Shinwell is a master in a particular art I was condemning.

Mr Shinwell, –You forced him, (Sir Thomas Dugdale), to resign and you know it.

Major Legge-Bourke maintained that with the Opposition it was “all or nothing.” They wanted to go “the whole hog” and put things completely in the strait-jacket of nationalisation. If that were done with sugar, would its price go up with the same rapidity as had the price of coal, he asked.

Mr Gordon Walker, (Labour, Smithwick), said the Bill involved unnecessary complexities, rigidities, Government interference with the economy, and aid to private enterprise, and was against the true long-term interests of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Hall, (Labour, Bolton West), said that about 90 percent of our sugar was now bought from the Commonwealth, but UK consumers paid something like £40 a ton, whereas if they got it at world prices it would be about £26 a ton.

Mr. Bottomley, (Labour, Rochester and Chatham), winding up for the Opposition, felt that the Bill strengthened the position of the merchants without any advantage to the consumer: in fact, the consumer was going to be worse off.

Mr. Nicholls, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, replying to the debate, maintained that the interest of Commonwealth producers would not be interfered with.

The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement would run until 1962.

Mr. Nicholls said some very harsh words had been said about monopolies. No one would deny the prominent part which Messrs. Tate and Lyle played in Sugar Refining. But, while they were

pre-eminent, theirs was not the only name in refining, and on top of that there was the British Sugar Corporation doing its part in refining.

“I think we ought to make it clear, in view of what has been said, that according to my information, the British Sugar Corporation has five million shares, and Messrs., Tate and Lyle has not got one of them.”

The Second Reading was carried on a division by 193 votes to 132, a majority of 61.

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British Sugar Corporation Management Changes.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, September the 7th, 1956.

Following the death in a road accident of Mr. Arthur Jones, general manager of the British Sugar Corporation’s Colwick factory, staff changes are announced.

Mr. A E Pike, general manager at the Ely factory for the past 11 years, becomes general manager at Colwick.

Mr. Lucius C Arthur, previously agriculturist at Peterborough, is to be the general manager at Ely.

Mr. A Irvine Rose, for six years agriculturist at Ely, has been transferred to Peterborough in a similar capacity, and is succeeded at Ely by Mr. Desmond W Bradford, a former Peterborough fieldman.

Mr. Arthur, who was educated at Mayfield College, Sussex, and the Harper Adams Agricultural College, Shropshire, entered the sugar industry at Bury Saint Edmunds in 1930.

He joined the RAFVR; (Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve), as a pilot in 1938, and from the beginning of the war served in the Army Co-operation and Coastal Commands. He was commissioned in 1940, and for three years was a prisoner of war in Germany. On his release from the RAF in 1945, he returned to Bury.

Five years later he was promoted to agriculturist at Felsted, Essex, and in 1953, was transferred to Peterborough.

Mr. and Mrs Arthur and their three sons, have been living at 357, Dogsthorpe Road.

A Ramsey Man.

Mr. Rose is the elder son of the late Mr. W A Rose, who was for 20 years chairman of the Ramsey County branch of the National Farmers Union. He went from Ramsey Grammar School to the Harper Adams Agricultural College, and in 1925, joined the staff of the beet sugar factory at Peterborough. As a Territorial, he was mobilised with the Royal Artillery at the outbreak of war, and was invalided out of the army in 1942, when he returned to the Peterborough factory. Transferred to Ely as Assistant Agriculturist in 1947, he was promoted to Agriculturist three years later.

Mr. Bradford is another Huntingdonshire man. He was educated at Huntingdon and Fletten County Grammar Schools, joining the British Sugar's Corporation staff at Peterborough in 1940. He volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm as a pilot in 1943, and was commissioned during

the following year. After completing his training in Canada, he served with RAF Coastal Command at Thorney Island, and on aircraft carriers.

On his release, he became a fieldman in the March district. He was transferred to the Ramsey district in 1947, and in 1950 was appointed assistant to the agriculturist at the Peterborough factory.

Photographs and captions of the three gentlemen are shown below:

MR. A. IRVIN ROSE, member of a well-known Ramsey family who has been appointed agriculturist at the Peterborough factory after nearly ten years in the department of the Ely factory.

MR. L. C. ARTHUR, the new general manager at the Ely factory of the British Sugar Corporation Ltd., formerly agriculturist at the Peterborough factory, he succeeds at Ely Mr. A. E. Pike, who has become general manager at the Colwick factory.

MR. DESMOND W. BRADFORD, who goes to Ely as agriculturist in succession to Mr. A. I. Rose. He has been a fieldman and assistant agriculturist at Peterborough.

Their captions read from left to right:

Mr. A Irvin Rose, member of a well-known Ramsey family, who has been appointed agriculturist at the Peterborough factory, after nearly ten years in the department of the Ely factory.

Mr. L C Arthur, the new general manager at the Ely factory of the British Sugar Corporation, Limited, formally agriculturist at the Peterborough factory, he succeeds at Ely, Mr. A E Pike, who has become general manager at the Colwick factory.

Mr. Desmond W Bradford, who goes to Ely as agriculturist in succession to Mr. A L Rose. He has been a fieldman and assistant agriculturist at Peterborough.

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## Sugar Beet Campaign Progress.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 26th, 1956.

A report was received on the position of the sugar beet campaign at Ely factory to date. The figures were as follows, (1955 in parenthesis). Sugar percentage, 14.73 percent, (15.77 percent); top tare, 2.74 lbs per hundredweight, (2.55 lbs per hundredweight); Root tare, 7.95 lbs per hundredweight, (12.27 lbs per hundredweight.)

The position in regard to sampling of beet at Ely factory was also reported on. It had now been decided to sample every twentieth lorry, from the side of the lorry. This was within the terms of the contract, but complaints had been received from members concerning this, and particularly in regard to the very short notice which had been given. There were also difficulties in regard to lorries which were so constructed, that the sides could not be lowered.

In view of the short notice, the factory would be cooperative at the moment, but they would expect producers and hauliers to have made the necessary arrangements in regard to lorries by November the 1st, so that all lorries could, in their turn, be sampled.

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## Potato Campaign.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, February the 8th, 1957.

A big surplus of potatoes available this season will not be wasted. The Potato Marketing Board have made arrangements with the British Sugar Corporation for the slicing and dehydrating of the surplus.

An official of the Potato Marketing Board said this week that six British Sugar Corporation factories would be used for the work. They include Lynn, Ely, Spalding and Bury Saint Edmunds. The potatoes will be transported to the factories by the Board. In order to keep down costs, each factory will deal only with potatoes from its normal area for sugar beet.

Lynn Factory was used for the purpose during the war and once or twice since. The last time was in 1949.

## Factory Slicing Potatoes.

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, February the 12th, 1957.

Spalding Beet Sugar Factory is one of the six centres to be used for slicing and drying the surplus of this year's seasons bumper potato crop, under arrangements made by the Potato Marketing Board and the British Sugar Corporation.

A Potato Marketing Board spokesman said that each factory would deal only with potatoes from its own neighbourhood.

The finished product will be sold mainly to compounders of balanced rations for livestock.

It is expected that the number of workers needed for the potatoes will be considerably smaller than for the normal sugar beet campaign.

Other British Sugar Corporation factories engaged on potato dehydration are Kings Lynn, Ely and Bury Saint Edmunds.

Sugar Beet Demonstration Cancelled.

The organisers of the annual demonstration of sugar beet drilling and thinning, announce that in view of the present restrictions on the use of petrol, it is not thought desirable to go ahead with the 1957 event as planned. A further announcement will be made should there be any alteration in the circumstances.

***

Accident Prevention Shield to Kelham.

The Newark Advertiser, Wednesday, March the 6th, 1957.

A photograph of five gentlemen and article below.

## ACCIDENT PREVENTION SHIELD TO KELHAM

*Making a presentation of British Sugar Corporation's Accident Prevention Shield in this "Advertiser" newsphoto to Mr. C. J. Jones, the Kelham factory's safety officer, is Mr. H. Cranston Mein, chief personnel and welfare officer of the corporation.*

*In the photograph, from left to right are Mr. R. Brooks, of the Ely factory, who were third in the competition, Mr. Mein, Mr. I. E. Parry, general manager of Kelham, Mr. Cooper and Mr. D. B. MacCallum, of Cupar factory, who were second.*

*The shield is presented annually to the factory in the corporation with the lowest accident ratio factor. This factor is based on a formula provided by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.*

*Mr. Mein made presentations to the representatives from Cupar and Ely.*

Article reads:

Making a presentation of British Sugar Corporation's Accident Prevention Shield in this "Advertiser" news-photo to Mr. C J Jones, the Kelham factory safety officer, to Mr. H Cranston Mein, chief personnel and welfare officer of the corporation.

In the photograph, from left to right are Mr. R Brooks, of the Ely Factory, who were third in the competition, Mr Mein, Mr. I E Parry, general manager of Kelham, Mr. Cooper and Mr. D B MacCallum, of Cupar factory, who were second.

The shield is presented annually to the factory in the corporation with the lowest accident ratio factor. This factor is based on a formula provided by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Mr Mein made presentations to the representatives from Cupar and Ely.

***

Potatoes In by Rail, Out by Road at Sugar Plant.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, March the 8th, 1957.

Thousands of tons of Black-land potatoes from the fens are going into Lynn Beet Sugar Factory for processing, –by rail, –and the finished product, a type of potato crisp, for use in the preparation of animal feeding-stuffs, is going out for despatch to various parts of the country, --by road.

On the face of it, the use of road vehicles seems somewhat ridiculous in view of the present petrol difficulties, but it would appear to suit all concerned. The Potato Marketing Board, who are behind the potato-drying scheme, are happy about it, the sugar factory have no complaints, and the farmers are contented.

It is merely the farmers responsibility to put the potatoes on passage at their nearest railhead. The potatoes are inspected on the farm, and after they are on the rail, the farmer's responsibility ends. The factory can accept them and use them at their convenience, day or night, and they do not need to open their roadway bridge; (weighbridge).

From the factory, the processed potatoes, much smaller in bulk, are despatched all over the country, and road transport is chosen because it can deliver from factory to depot with only one handling.

One of Six.

Lynn Beet Sugar Factory is one of six sugar factories in Britain engaged at the present time in processing potatoes.

Such factories have been carrying out this work quite a lot both during and since the war, but it is the first time the Lynn factory has been engaged since 1949.

Ely Sugar factory, which was last used in 1953, is another to be engaged on potato processing this year, and others are those at Spalding, Bury Saint Edmunds, Allscott, which is in the Midlands, and Cupar in Scotland.

In addition, the factory at Navenby in Lincolnshire, is being utilised for crop-drying, and an official of the Potato Marketing Board in London said yesterday that experiments were going on to see whether herring meal factories in the north of Scotland could also process potatoes.

Animal Feed.

The process entails drying potato slices to form a type of crisp. These, containing 76 percent carbohydrate, and 7 percent protein, can be used as replacing barley in a balanced ration. About five and a half tons of potatoes are required to make one ton of dried slices.

From the factories, the slices are sent to animal feed compounders in the various parts of the country for mixing into feedstuffs.

The potatoes are supplied to the Lynn factory, mainly from the Fen black-lands, and are of the worst type of potato, the ones the public generally do not want.

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Directorship for B.S.C. Chief Technical Officer.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, December the 27th, 1957.

It was announced at the weekend that Mr. John Campbell Macdonald, Chief Technical Officer of the British Sugar Corporation, and Mr. G.C. Ash, the Corporation secretary, had been appointed directors of the corporation.

Mr. Macdonald, who lives at 214, Broadway, Peterborough, is responsible for the process plant and the manufacture of sugar in the 18 factories of the Corporation, and has supervised reconstruction amounting to £10,000,000 since his appointment in 1948.

A native of Gourock, Renfrewshire, he was educated at Gourock High School, Greenock High School, and the Royal Technical College, Glasgow.

During the First World War, he served in the Marine Salvage section of the Royal Navy between 1916 and 1919, and was present at the salvage of H.M. Submarine C-16 near Harwich. H.M. submarine K-13 in Gareloch and the German submarine UC-44 off the South Coast of Ireland. He also took part in the salvage of the famous mystery ship H M S, Q-5, commanded by Commander Gordon Campbell V.C., and the recovery of £7 million in gold bullion from S.S. Laurentis, sunk off Loch Swilly. He survived the sinking of H.M.S. Salvage Ship Thrush, and finished the war in H.M.S.S. Racer.

Worked in Brazil.

After resuming his studies, Mr. Macdonald gained an Associateship of the Royal Technical College in sugar manufacture in 1922, and went to Brazil to work as a chemist in cane sugar factories in Goiânia and Tiuma in the state of Pernambuco.

He returned to Britain on leave in 1925, and to gain further experience, took a temporary job as a draughtsman during the building of the Beet Sugar Factory at Ely. When the factory was almost completed, he accepted the post of chief chemist, and after two campaigns was promoted to assistant works manager. In1936, on the amalgamation of the 18 factories into the British Sugar Corporation, he was appointed works manager at Ely Factory. In 1941 came his promotion to general manager.

During the last war he served in the Second Battalion, Isle of Ely Home Guard, as a Lieutenant in charge of the factory platoon. Throughout the war, as well as making sugar from beet, refining raw sugar from abroad, and drying potatoes and other vegetables, the factory was engaged in the production of essential parts for the Churchill tank. The factory was bombed, and put out of action for almost 4 weeks during the 1940-41 campaign.

In 1934, Mr. Macdonald gained associate membership of the Institute of Chemical Engineers and in 1944 was elected to full membership. He is also a member of the British Association of Chemists, the Society of Chemical Industry, the American Chemical Society and the Institute of Fuel.

Further Promotion.

In 1945 he was promoted to be one of the three technical supervisors of the Sugar Corporation, and left Ely to live at Peterborough. In 1948, he became chief technical officer.

A married man, he lives at 214, Broadway. He has two daughters, Mrs. R.J. Martin, who now lives at Grimsby and is a Bachelor of Commerce, of London University, and Mairi, who qualified for membership of the Association of Occupational Therapists, (M.A.O.T.), and is occupational therapist at Northampton General Hospital.

In his younger days, Mr Macdonald was a soccer and tennis player. His principal hobbies, –in addition to sugar technology, --now are salmon fishing, and genealogy, especially of the many branches of the Clan Campbell.

A photograph below of Mr. John Campbell Macdonald,

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Ely Campaign Ends.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Friday, January the 17th, 1958.

In the 96-day campaign at the Ely sugar beet factory, which ended last week, the yield per acre was 10.8 tons, compared with 13.2 tons last year. Sugar content averaged 14.2 percent, over one percent lower than last year. Virus yellows are blamed for both decreases.

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Country Chronicle.

Sugar Beet Baby, of Farm Family.

By R W G Graves.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, November the 21st, 1958.

The old saying “What you lose on the roundabouts you gain on the swings,” was never better illustrated than it has been this year, when we consider the harvest bestowed upon us by Nature. The corn harvest, which caused even Grey-beards to vow there had never seen a worse one, has been followed by near disaster for our fishermen friends on the other side of the county.

There, “the harvest of the sea” has been but a miserable shadow of what it used to be. The herring have once again failed to “swim”, and there is talk of a complete and untimely cessation of the herring fishing. Yarmouth bloaters, once so common and so cheap that they were almost despised, are now something of a luxury, and we have witnessed this year, something our grandparents could never have believed, –housewives queuing for bloaters!

Set against these two dismal stories are two brighter ones, particularly for those who gain their living from the land in West Norfolk.

Bumper Crop.

There has been a bumper crop of apples to please the man who depends upon his orchards to help with the bank balance, and also comes the welcome news that the dark clouds of summer, have at last shown their silver lining for the farmers, and this season's record beet crop is being referred to in terms of a, “record.”

It seems strange to think of our West Norfolk fields without sugar beet, and Lynn, Wissington and Ely, without their sugar factories. Yet of all our farm crops, sugar beet is perhaps the baby of the family. Although beet were grown and processed in this country in 1868, it was not until just over 30 years ago that the crop really began to occupy a serious place in farming.

First Factory.

Asked to name the first sugar factory in East Anglia, most people will tell you “Cantley”, but in fact our neighbours in Suffolk have that honour. There was a beet sugar factory at the delightful old Town of Lavenham in 1868, and it was processing 7,000 tons of beet a year shortly after that date. Not much by modern standards, but quite “something” then.

Records show that crops averaged 13 tons per acre, with the highest yield at 17 tons per acre, which is not greatly different from today. The “syrup” obtained from the processed beet was in the region of 10 percent to 12 percent. The standard aimed at, in growing the beet, was for roots to weigh 2 1/2 lbs each.

Payment.

When we come to the financial side of those early beet harvests, then all similarity to modern farming ends. The factory at Lavenham contracted with farmers for the beet to be delivered to the factory “clean” at 20 shillings a ton, with the farmers having the option of buying back the pulp at 12 shillings a ton.

One interesting fact about payment emerges from the records of this early factory. A rather unusual scale of prices was devised by the factory, –and it would be interesting to know whether such a scheme would find favour today. It was assumed that the longer the beet were left in heaps in the field, the more weight they lost, and therefore the price per ton paid to the farmers was advanced slightly, as the season progressed.

Great Drawback.

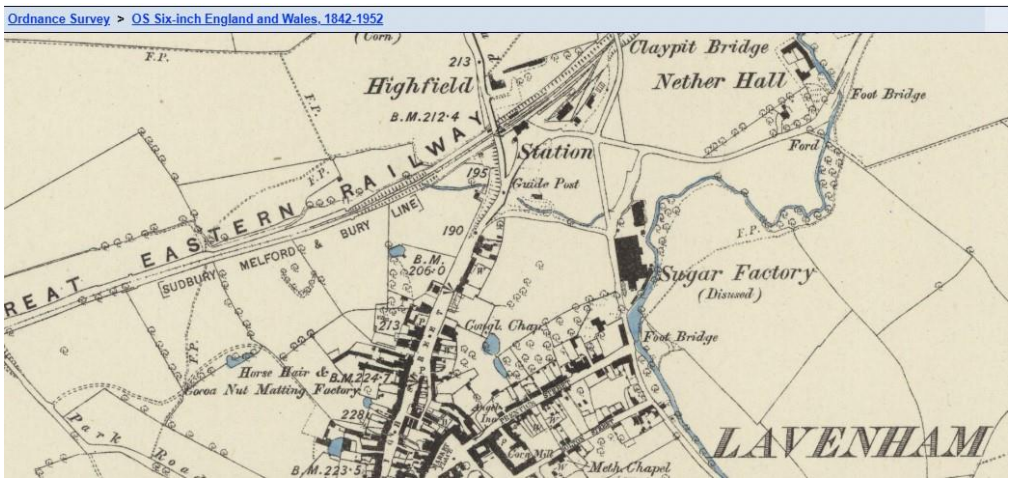
One of the great drawbacks in those days was the lack of facilities for transporting the beet to the factory. Roads were not what they are today, and neither were the vehicles.

Come to that, the problem of transport is still with us. Only a week or so ago, a farmer friend of mine was telling me that he could not grow sugar beet, –not that his land was not fertile. Far from it. The trouble was, no vehicle that he had yet discovered could get the beet off his field onto the road in a wet winter. Admittedly, the road was some distance away.

How great then, must transport difficulties have been 90 years ago, when horses provided the motive power? True, mechanised help was, “just around the corner”, because at Lavenham, we know that in one season, 2,000 tons of beet were carried to the factory by traction engines.

It is from these early and rather crude beginnings, that our present-day extensive sugar beet industry has been developed, and our farmers may, perhaps, feel a certain gratitude to those “old timers”, for providing what has proved to be this year, an excellent, “insurance crop”, against a bad corn harvest.

Below is a map of Lavenham showing the position of the disused Sugar Factory.

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Beet Campaign.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, January the 29th, 1959.

The 1958-9 campaign at the Ely Sugar Beet Factory, now in its final stages, is expected to end in about a fortnight's time.

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British Sugar Corporation Limited.

Record yields in nine areas.

The Scotsman, Wednesday, July the 27th, 1960.

Last year, with a yield of 5,509,769 tons, the beet crop came second only to the record of 1958-59, (5,742,328 tons). The highest average yield per acre we have yet reached was obtained by the growers for our Spalding factory with, 19.32 tons of beet, (equivalent to 66.06 hundredweights of sugar), per acre.

Record yields were also obtained in eight of our other factory areas. The sugar content of the beet was exceptionally high, particularly in the early part of the season, and the campaign average of 16.9 percent, was the highest since 1947-48. The yield of sugar per acre for all areas reached a figure of 45.3 hundredweight, the highest so far achieved.

The crop started well, and three quarters of the acreage was sown by mid-April. This good beginning had an important bearing on the final results, as later sowings suffered badly from the exceptionally dry summer, particularly in East Anglia. The increasing use of specially processed seed, in conjunction with precision drills, has helped to reduce hand labour.

Early sowings germinated well, and conditions were excellent for singling and weed control. There came, however, a rapid build-up of aphids in all areas, which would have proved disastrous, but for the effectiveness of systemic spraying.

The campaign started early, and from beginning to end, all factories were kept supplied with good quality beet. This year about 63 percent of the crop was harvested by machine. The development of beet cleaning devices has been encouraged and more growers use cleaner-loaders. These save the cost to the grower of transporting soil to the factories, and also reduce factory costs in soil removal and plant maintenance.

Sugar production figures were the highest we have yet achieved. We produced 477,049 tons of refined and 312,924 tons of raw, equivalent to a total output in terms of white sugar of 773,292 tons. Dried pulp production in all forms came to 420,822 tons and molasses production amounted to 281,112 tons.

The average slicing capacity reached a new level of 49,007 tons per day, being nearly 1,400 tons per day higher than the previous record of last year.

The degree of sugar extraction from the beet is an important aspect of technical efficiency. Last year, I informed you that the overall sugar extraction in terms of white sugar and molasses had increased from 93 percent in 1948 to 96.5 percent. In this last campaign, the figure was

improved still further to 96.75 percent. The increase in extraction since 1948, based on the past campaign, is equivalent to an additional 35,000 tons of sugar per annum.

The improvement in extraction last year, was made possible by the introduction of new diffusion plants at Bury Saint Edmunds, Ely, and Kidderminster, and of new filtration plants at the Brigg and Ipswich factories. In addition to these major installations, a new power plant was installed at Kidderminster, new evaporator plant at Bardney, and vacuum pans at Brigg. Improvements in beet reception facilities were made at Bardney and Colwick.

In the field of fuel economy, we have reduced still further, coal consumption in our boiler houses. Based on last campaign, this amounted to a saving of 6,000 tons of coal over the previous year.

In the national interest, our task is to process in the most economic way home-grown beet which, under the Sugar Act 1956, it is our duty to purchase. Such success as we have achieved can be gauged not only from the various individual results I have already mentioned, but also by the way in which our whole operation measures against the agreed standards set out in the Incentive Agreement. Efficient operating is essential to the well-being of the Corporation, and it is of benefit to the consumer.

It is our constant endeavour to give the best possible service to the users of our sugar. For a number of years, we have delivered granulated sugar in bulk to many of our customers by gravity discharge from road tankers. Sugar can now be discharged from the tankers by pneumatic pressure. This method enables customers to obtain advantages and economies which arise from the handling of sugar in bulk, in cases where premises and plant do not permit easy installation of the conventional method.

We are supplying liquid sugar of first-class quality, suitable for use in a wide range of products. As with bulk granulated sugar, liquid sugar offers economies to users, and I am confident that the demand for it will increase. We offer a free technical advice service in respect of all matters connected with the industrial use of sugar. This service includes preparation of schemes for installations or alterations of plant, and liaison with manufacturers of equipment. It is therefore of particular value to manufacturers, contemplating the use of liquid sugar and of dry sugar in bulk.

The above are extracts from the circulated address of Sir Edmund Bacon, BT., O B E., T D., J P., Chairman, presented with the report and accounts for the year ended 31st March, 1960, at the twenty fourth annual ordinary general meeting, held at 134, Piccadilly, London, W 1, on the 26th of July, 1960.

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Mr. G N Wardle is Retiring from B.S.C.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Saturday, August the 27th, 1960.

Retiring next Friday, after 30 years' service with the British Sugar Corporation, is Mr. George Nicholas Wardle, general manager of the Peterborough Sugar factory since 1946. There will be a small informal dinner on September the second for senior staff and employees, both from the factory and central offices, to mark Mr Wardle's retirement, and a presentation is planned.

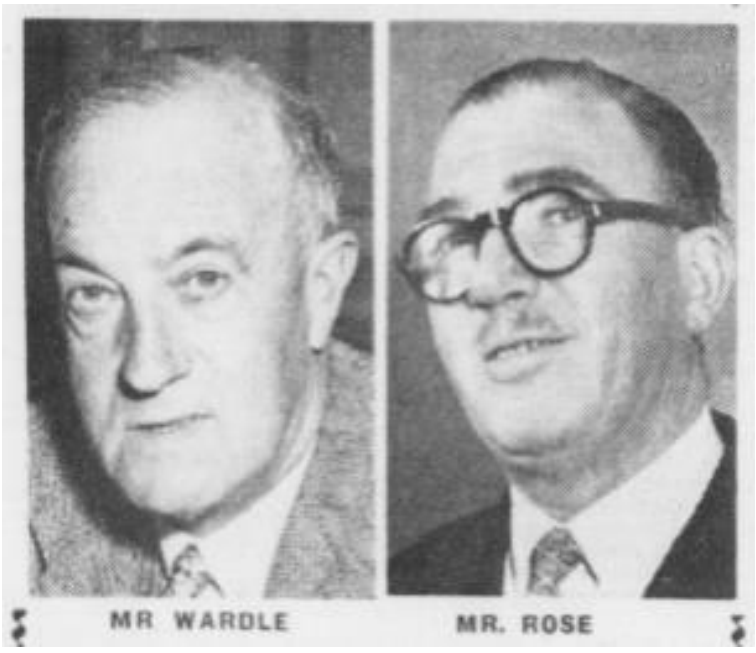
During his stay in Peterborough, Mr Wardle has made many friends, and he intends to remain in the area in his retirement, at his new home in Latham Avenue, Orton Longueville. “I don't really want to lose touch with everyone here, and I've always intended to remain in this locality,” Mr. Wardle explained.

Some degree of Mr. Wardle's activities outside the B.S.C. can be seen from the following positions he has held: Chairman of Huntingdonshire Industrial Civil Defence Committee, 1958-1960; president, Peterborough and District Industrial Accident Prevention Group, 1958-1959; president, Rotary Club of Peterborough, 1951-1952; treasurer, Peterborough Rotary Club, 1952-1957.Since 1946.

Lancashire born, Mr. Wardle is the sixth and youngest son of a schoolmaster. He was educated at the Clifton Elementary School and Manchester Grammar School, and was afterwards articled to Clarke, Price, Heywood and Company, chartered accountants of Manchester, eventually becoming an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. After serving in the First World War, he joined the McAlpine Construction Company as cashier, and accountant, and was employed as assistant secretary of the Wembley Empire Exhibition, a position he describes as “very interesting.”

His career in the sugar industry began in 1926, when he was appointed secretary of the Central Sugar Company, Limited, and the Yorkshire Sugar Company, Limited. He also acted as joint liquidator of the two companies in 1936, when the British Sugar Corporation, to which he became chief accountant, came into existence. In 1940, Mr Wardle was appointed local manager of the Kings Lynn sugar factory, and he later went to Felstead in a similar capacity before coming to Peterborough in 1946.

Succession.


MR WARDLE MR. ROSE

Mr Wardle will be succeeded by Mr. Irwin Rose, who has been an agriculturist at the Woodston factory since 1956, before which he held a similar post at the Ely factory. He was at one time a fieldman in the Ramsey area for the B.S.C., and was succeeded in this capacity by his younger brother, Mr. Oswald Rose, in 1928.

Mr. Oswald Rose Is now an agricultural development officer for B.S.C., travelling extensively to agricultural research stations all over the world. Both men come from a very well-known farming family at Ramsey.

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## A Record Year for Sugar Beet.

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, March the 7th, 1961.

Britain's sugar beet crop has produced the highest tonnage in the history of the crop in this country; 7,215,756 tons. The quantity of granulated sugar this represents is 883,000 tons.

In addition, a greater quantity of molassed sugar beet pulp than ever before, was dispatched to growers and the feeding-stuffs trade, says the British Sugar Corporation.

The yield of sugar beet for the whole country averaged 17.38 tons an acre, which is 4 tons an acre better than the previous season.

### Spalding yield.

The average yield of 19.73 tons at Ipswich was the highest average figure so far recorded in Britain. Averages of 19 tons an acre or over, were also obtained in the Ely and Spalding factory areas. At the Bardney factory, the yield was 17 tons an acre.

The greatest quantity of beet processed by a single factory was 792,000 tons by Bury Saint Edmunds, Suffolk.

Continuous rain during the summer helped the crop to put on weight, although it kept the sugar content at a low level.

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## Sugar Beet Reception.

The Lynn News and Advertiser, Tuesday, September the 19th, 1961.

Sugar beet reception techniques, as in use last year at Wissington and Peterborough sugar factories, are, this season, being extended to Lynn, Bury Saint Edmunds, Ely and Ipswich. Ultimately, they are to be brought into use at the remaining factories also, reports the British sugar beet Review.

Under the procedure, weights are recorded electronically; and the advice note sent to the grower includes, in addition to the normal data, the net value of the load. In the laboratory, the sugar content is calculated by an electronic saccharimeter.

Details of all operations are punched in cards, which are later sent to the British Sugar Corporation’s central accounting department at Peterborough for processing and preparation of the grower’s advice note.

### Film in Colour.

The Corporation have produced a film in colour, in which the entire procedure is explained in words and pictures. Arrangements for showings can be made direct with any of the Corporation’s factories or Southern Area Office.

Higher beet yields may become quite normal.

Because losses from virus yellows disease in sugar beet are now avoidable to such a large an extent, the higher yields experienced in recent years may well become quite normal in future, comments the British Sugar Beet Review, September issue.

In these circumstances, growers could do worse than review their harvesting arrangements to see whether practices that were satisfactory for the yields of a few years ago are, in fact, the best in an era of continuous high yields.

Of course, whatever the technical plans, the overall strategy should be to get a good move on right at the start, in particular by using early permits.

Any tonnage that may be sacrificed by early delivery of part of the crop is of little account, compared with the value of the tonnage that delay might place in jeopardy later on.

Price of delay.

“In general, the later one lifts, the more costly it becomes. Bad weather too, inevitably increases the problems of dirt tares, thus slowing down lifting, and putting up transport costs.

But worst of all, excessive dirt slows down the factory, and so reduces the rate of intake, – with a snowball effect on subsequent deliveries. That is the price of delay,” comments the review.

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City British Sugar Corporation Man’s New Post.

He founded Nene Valley Singers.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Tuesday, September the 19th, 1961.

Mr. I L Slatopolsky, for many years on the staff of the Peterborough Beet Sugar Factory, has been appointed general manager of the British Sugar Corporation’s Spalding factory. He succeeds Mr. E Willemstyn, who is retiring at the end of this month.

Mr. Slatopolsky, who is a native of Glasgow, is a Bachelor of Science of Glasgow University, and an Associate of the Royal Institute of Chemistry.

He began his career in sugar at the Ipswich factory in 1925, incidentally under Mr. Willemstyn, who was then chief chemist, and came to Peterborough in 1927, soon after the factory was completed, as assistant chemist.

He became chief chemist before being appointed assistant Superintendent. In 1928, he founded among factory staff and workers, a male voice choir, the British Sugar Corporation Singers.

Today, the choir are well known as the Nene Valley Singers.

Since 1948, he has been manager of the Ely Factory, and while there he has continued his interest in music.

MR. SLATOPOLSKY

He has directed the Ely Male Voice Choir and Ely Opera Group, the latter specialising in productions of grand opera including “The Magic Flute”, “Don Pasquale”, “Carmen”, “Faust" and many others.

In his music work, Mr. Slatopolsky is ably assisted by his wife, who is a native of Geddington, near Kettering. With professional experience as producer, actress and singer, Mrs. Slatopolsky took leading parts in the operas as well as producing and providing the costumes from her collection of many hundreds.

Recently, she produced and supplied all the costumes for the Saint Ives Music Society's performance of “Pink Champagne”.

Mr. and Mrs. Slatopolsky have a son, who is an electronics engineer with Marconi at Chelmsford.

A photograph of Mr Slatopolsky is shown to the left:

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Sugar Beet.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 5th, 1962.

Mr. J A Taylor reported on a meeting at the Ely factory, and stated that the dirt tare in 1962 had only averaged 9.13 percent, including 2.4 percent tops, as compared with 17.8 percent for the previous year.

He also warned members, that the Sugar Corporation would deal very severely with growers who grew more acres of sugar beet than contracted for. If they persisted in this, it was possible that their contract would be withdrawn completely.

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Tour of Sugar Factory.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, November the 15th, 1962.

Soham Young Farmers’ Club had a conducted tour of the Beet Sugar Factory at Ely. The party divided into three groups, each being in the charge of a guide. The processing of beet into sugar was seen and explained, from the arrival of the beet at the factory, until it emerged as

refined sugar. Thanks were voiced by Mr Adrian Barnett to Mr. Duncan Elsden for arranging the visit.

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Soham N.F.U. Concern at Beet Price Structure.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, November the 29th, 1962.

Soham branch of the National Farmers' Union, expressed concern at their annual meeting, at the apparent reduction in price many of them would experience, when the proposed new price structure for sugar beet, for the 1963 crop, comes into effect.

The Secretary, Mr. M A Wilson, explained the changes that had been announced in the 1962 Price Review, and illustrated their effects with figures.

These showed that where the sugar content was 16 percent or higher, the grower would benefit, but where it fell below 15.9 percent, the grower would lose, –to the extent of four shillings, and 11 pence per ton, at 14 percent sugar content.

Average loss.

Using the average figures of the Ely factory for the 1961 crop, this would mean that the average loss to growers in the Ely factory area would be about 3 shillings per ton, or 46 shillings, and 6 pence, per acre.

These were only the average figures, and those for the fen growers would be likely to be considerably worse than this.

The branch unanimously supported the resolution that, "This branch is perturbed by the proposed changes in the price arrangements for sugar beet of the 1963 crop, which will adversely affect the price obtained by growers in many instances, particularly where beet is grown on the fenlands in East Anglia."

The resolution will be forwarded to the county executive committee. The branch also considered the possibility of introducing more vegetable crops into the Soham area, with a view to extending the crop rotation. This matter is to be explored further.

Earlier in the meeting, the Cambridgeshire Farmers Union County Chairman, Mr. I R Richmond, had outlined the work of the union during the past year, both at county and national level.

He made particular note of the union's efforts in regard to the Common Market negotiations. He explained the union's policy in this matter, and urged members to give their full support to this policy, not only in their own thoughts, but among their friends and neighbours.

Mr. K P Leonard was re-elected branch chairman with Mr. E Seal, as vice chairman for the coming year.

The meeting unanimously supported the nomination of Mr. J A Taylor, of Fordham, for the position of county vice-chairman for 1963.

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Save Beet Plan Wrecked by Freeze-up's Return.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Tuesday, February the 5th, 1963.

A large-scale experiment by the British Sugar Corporation to see whether beet that had been thawed out, was suitable for processing, has been beaten by the return of the cold weather.

The Woodston factory was mentioned in the House of Commons yesterday, when Sir Harry Legge Bourke, Conservative M.P. for the Isle of Ely, asked the Minister of Agriculture about 3,000 acres of sugar beet still frozen in the ground in the Isle of Ely.

"Would the corporation's factories at Ely, Stoke Ferry and Peterborough be kept open or re-open sufficiently long, to enable the beet to thaw out naturally, and so provide the maximum yield of sugar possible?" he wanted to know.

Mr. J Scott Hopkins, Joint Parliamentary Secretary, said that he was confident that the corporation would do everything commercially practicable to deal with any beet which can be delivered in a condition which makes it worth processing.

But Mr. A I Rose, general manager of the Woodston factory, has issued a statement which reveals that their plans have been beaten by the return of the cold weather.

He says: "Deliveries under the experiment have dwindled to nothing, and, in consequence, the last of the 18 factories: –at Felsted, Essex, –was forced to cease operations last evening."

"It is estimated that 250 tons of beet remain frozen in the ground, and farmers cannot harvest it until the arrival of the thaw."

"We are still willing to consider re-opening the factory when the thaw comes, if sufficient beet suitable for sugar manufacturing, can be delivered to it.

He concludes: "Monday's further setback to our plans is very disappointing."

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2,000 Acres of Beet Still in Land.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, February the 14th, 1963.

More than 100 local sugar beet growers attended an open meeting, organised by the Soham Branch of the National Farmers Union, in conjunction with the National Agricultural Advisory Service at the Village College, last week.

The meeting opened with a talk by Mr D Bradford, Agricultural officer of the Isle of Ely beet sugar factory, who dealt with many of the problems facing the grower, particularly with regard to the recent disastrous season.

Mr Bradford said that although 91 percent of the local crop was delivered, about 2,000 acres of beet was still in the land.

The Corporation was willing to consider reopening a factory if sufficient beet could be delivered, but he felt the chances of reopening were remote.

Target Date.

Earlier, he said the growers must consider getting their beet lifted by the first week in December, although they had many other problems, to avoid sustaining the losses incurred this year.

After Mr Bradfords talk, the audience saw a sound film, “Down the Rows”, dealing principally with thinning and singling.

A panel of experts answered a variety of questions dealing with many aspects of beet growing, and also ranging from the administration of the factory, to the function of the National Farmers Union representatives at the Corporation’s factories.

On the panel were Mr Bradford, Miss J Botting, the National Farmers Union Sugar Beet Committee secretary, Mr. E R Bullen, Crop Husbandry Officer of the National Agricultural Advisory Service, Mr P Savory, vice president, of the National Farmers Union Sugar Beet Committee, Mr J A Taylor, a member of the Sugar Beet Committee, and Mr Carden of the National Agricultural Advisory Service. The chairman was Mr Keith Leonard.

When the last question had been satisfactorily answered, a vote of thanks to Mr. Bradford and the members of the panel was voiced on behalf of the National Farmers Union members by Mr. Graham Hawes, of Wicken.

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Farmers Told of Sugar Beet Trials.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, March the 1st, 1963.

Over 70 local farmers attended a Forum, organised by the National Agricultural Advisory Service in conjunction with the British Sugar Corporation, to discuss “Sugar Yield for Profit” at the Martin School, Littleport, on Monday evening.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. J S Martin, (chairman), of Waterbeach, and the discussion was opened by Mr. Frank Starling, (chairman of the District Committee of the National Agricultural Advisory Service).

Mr. L Arthur, (general manager, Ely Beet Sugar Factory), set the scene, by dealing with the requirements of the factories. He said they wanted beet of high sugar content and high purity, so that it was easy to extract during processing. Doctor T. Batey, (Soil Chemistry Department, Cambridge), spoke on the manurial requirements of the beet crop, and pointed out that farmers should not overdo the nitrogen content in the fertiliser. 60 units of nitrogen per acre, he maintained, was the upper limit.

Trials.

Dealing with the different varieties of beet, Mr. L A Willey, (Trials Branch, National Institute of Agricultural Botany, (NIAB), told the meeting of the results of the trials on sugar beet, and mentioned that these had shown that there were five varieties of beet which gave above average yields. These were Sharpe's Klein E, Camkilt, Hillshog Polyploid, Sharpe’s Klein Polybeet, and Hillshog N. He added that there could be a £7 to £9 per acre increase in gross

cash return, by using the best varieties. In conclusion, he said that farmers should be prepared to change their varieties of beet as new and improved varieties came along.

The problem of the actual growing of the beet was bridged by Mr. D W Bradford, (Agriculturist, British Sugar Corporation), who emphasised the importance of drilling early. He said fen farmers should aim at a plant population of 30,000 per acre to allow for the inevitable loss of plants through mechanical cultivation, thus providing the optimum of 25,000 plants per acre for best results on fen soils.

Single Early.

Mr. Bradford said it was also important to single early. There would be a loss in yield if singling was delayed after the four-leaf stage, he pointed out.

Speaking of the importance of virus yellow control, he advised growers to adopt the control measures, and be guided by the factory staff.

Results of trials had shown that Sharpe's Klein Polybeet had yielded 0.6 percent higher sugar than Sharpe's Klein E. In addition, the root weight per acre was one ton less, but the cash return was a few shillings more. The discussion was limited to sugar production on black fen soils.

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Big Beet Crop in Spite of Weather.

The Lynn News and Advertiser, Tuesday, March the 5th, 1963.

Although many thousands of tons of beet are still locked in the ground, this year's crop so far is the fifth highest grown in the country. The provisional total yield is 5,312,888 tons, about 600,000 tons less than last year.

Lynn Factory has handled the fifth highest tonnage in the country, but their figure of 340,477 tons is just over 64,000 tons less than last year.

The average sugar content was higher, however, and above the national average. Lynn's percentage is 16.12 against 15.77 last year. This year's national average is 15.67.

Wissington has not achieved quite so much in comparison. Their tonnage this year is 249,036 tons, (307,312 last year), with an average sugar content of 15.65, (15.30 last year).

Factory Yields.

Highest individual factory yields were in the Spalding, Ely and Ipswich areas, where 14 tons an acre was exceeded. The average yield for the remaining 15 factory areas was 12.99 tons.

Total production of sugar in terms of white sugar was 685,000 tons. Dried molassed sugar beet pulp production was 430,000 tons.

Virus yellows attacks were light, but the season was marred by difficult weather conditions, particularly after the turn of the year, says the March edition of the British Sugar Beet Review.

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## Two Ely Area Break-ins.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, April the 12th, 1963.

Two premises in the Ely area were broken into at the weekend. The first, on Friday night, was at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Sports and Social Club, in Lynn Rd, Ely. A small quantity of cigarettes was stolen. The second, the next night, was at the Slade Garage, Witcham, owned by Mr. Kingsley. About £5 in cash was taken.

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## Fenland Soil to be Given Away.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, May the 3rd, 1963.

A million tons of fertile Fenland soil is to be given away at Ely. Standing 30 feet high, and covering 100 acres, the heap of soil has been washed from sugar beet that has gone to the Ely beet factory for processing, over the last 30 years.

A spokesman for the factory said, “We get about 30,000 tons of soil every year with the beet. It is washed off, and dumped on a site opposite the factory.”

“It has got to the stage now where we either have to get rid of it, or buy more land to dump it on. It is cheaper to give it away.”

“Last year we managed to get rid of about 70,000 tons, but that has not made much impression on the pile.”

He added: “It is surprising the sort of people who want the soil. People making up gardens, local authorities banking up roads and filling in rubbish dumps. It has all kinds of uses.”

Anyone wanting soil has to arrange their own cartage.

## Sugar Beet Yellows after a hard winter.

So far as one can foresee, a widespread early attack of virus yellows in sugar beet is unlikely in 1963. The stormy summer of 1962, cold autumn, and long severe winter, have been unfavourable for the aphid vector of the yellow’s virus.

Many of the brassica crops on which it normally lives during the winter have been killed by frost. Clamped mangold's have been in great demand for stock feed, so that few will remain when the sugar beet is sown. Thus, few virus-carrying aphids will reach root crops from this source.

The hard weather has killed many sugar beet and mangold stecklings, and aphids will not have survived on them as they can, after mild winters. The past winter has provided an excellent cleaning process, but some virus sources, and some aphids will remain.

How rapidly they will spread in the sugar beet crop, will depend on the spring and summer weather, for the efficiency of measures taken to control them.

## Fumigation Experiment.

A procedure for fumigating clamps with methyl bromide has been developed recently. Plans for a large-scale experiment to test it on farms have been abandoned, because few clamps remain. Sugar beet growers in East Anglia who have aphid-infested mangold clamps and wish to co-operate in experiments on fumigation, should write to Broom's Barn Experimental Station. The fumigation has been proved harmless to the mangolds, and to stock that eat them; the questions to settle are whether the aphids can be killed with certainty on the farm, and the cost and practicability of the method.

Whether sugar beet that was frozen in the ground last winter will grow and be a source of disease is problematical. Most plants will have been killed by frost, but odd ones may survive, and yellows may well spread from them to young sugar-beet plants. Growers should ensure that unharvested roots, not buried deeply, are killed by cultivations or by herbicidal sprays, should they produce sprouts.

In 1962, aphids were late, but became numerous at the end of July, when stecklings (a small late-planted plant of a biennial root crop (such as beet or carrot) that is usually dug and stored over winter and replanted the next season for seed), sown in July had just "brairded"; **(**the first shoots or sprouts to appear above the ground)

Spraying with insecticides failed to prevent the stecklings from getting yellows, and more stecklings were infected than for many years.

## Spraying.

Should aphids infest seed crops next summer, and produce winged progeny, they could spread yellows not only within the seed crops, but also to root crops. Seed crops will be few, so it should be practical to keep them free from aphids. Warnings will be sent to seed firms if aphids start to infest seed crops, advising spraying with systemic insecticides. A single spray in June before the plants get too big, may be enough; if later sprays are needed, they must be applied with high clearance machines, or from the air.

In gardens and allotments and on weeds, the aphids will have survived in two ways, –as living insects on plants in sheltered places or glasshouses, on house-plants, and on the shoots of stored roots and vegetables; and secondly in the egg stage on Prunus species, especially peach. There is little the farmer can do about these sources. He must accept the fact that some aphids will reach his crops. By spraying with insecticide, he can prevent heavy infestations building up, which may well happen quickly if the weather favours them. Weeds, wild beet or winter vegetables of Beta species, which often over-winter, infected with yellows virus, are unlikely to be important sources of virus this year.

## Investigation.

The virus sources mentioned above are those of the sugar-beet yellows virus. The sugar-beet mild yellowing virus, which has become increasingly prevalent in Eastern England during recent years, may come from other, as yet, unrecognised hosts. The host range of this virus is being investigated.

It is probably inevitable that some aphids will carry yellows virus to young root crops each spring. Here the aphids multiply, spread the virus to patches of plants, and then winged aphids develop on the infected plants and spread the disease widely. The spray-warning scheme, run

by the sugar factories deals with this contingency. As soon as aphids infest crops and threaten to spread yellows, the factories advise growers to spray their crops with insecticide. This year's crop will be sown late, and as the disease spreads more rapidly in late-sown, than early-sown crops, spraying may be needed in some areas, in spite of the salutary effect of the hard winter.

Biographical Note.

Doctor Hull is in charge of Broom's Barn Experimental Station, Bury Saint Edmunds, for research in sugar beet disease problems. This work was previously undertaken at Dunholme Field Station, Lincoln, where Doctor Hull was in charge from 1949 until its move to the present location. He has held research appointments at the Imperial College of Science, and at the former Fruit and Vegetable Preservation Research Station, Chipping Campden.

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British Sugar Corporation Limited.

Effect of the 1962-1963 weather.

The Scotsman, Thursday, July the 11th, 1963.

The total tonnage of beet delivered, 5,313,003 tons, –represents 12.99 tons per total crop acre, and is the fifth best in the Corporation's history.

Average sugar content at 15.68 percent, was slightly higher than that of last year. The sugar in the beet, as sampled upon delivery at the factories, was 40.74, hundredweight, per acre.

The output in terms of white sugar was 686,512 tons, the production of dried pulp in all forms, was 431,913 tons, and molasses produced amounted to 242,188 tons.

The weather in 1962 was not favourable to sugar beet. Seed beds were good, and a dry March encouraged early sowing, but late frosts, and a prolonged cold Spring delayed establishment of the crop, and slow early growth, induced an above average number of plants to run to seed. These "bolters" reduce beet yield, and impair harvesting and factory efficiency. On the credit side, however, the crop enjoyed a greater freedom from virus yellows disease than for many years.

Constant inspections by our field-staff showed that green aphids, which transmit the disease, were virtually absent, and it was not necessary to issue any material number of warnings to growers to spray with systemic insecticides. This resulted in a saving in cost to the farmer, and has amply justified the inspection procedure and spray warning system which, under the guidance of Doctor Hull at Broom's Barn Experimental Station, has operated to such good effect since 1958.

Further substantial progress has been made in the adoption of modern cultural practices, particularly with regard to spring work. Processed seed was used on 80 percent of the acreage sown, which compares with 66 percent in the previous season, and the use of precision drills showed a further significant increase.

Very encouraging results were obtained for the first time on a wide commercial basis, from the application of chemicals at the time of drilling for weed control. This technique, combined with the use of precision drills, mechanical thinners and generic mono germs seed which the plant

breeders are developing, holds out the promise of permitting complete mechanisation of the spring work. This is an essential objective, having regard both to the high cost of hand labour, and the continued decline in the available labour force.

Eighty-five percent of the crop delivered was harvested mechanically, compared with 77 percent in 1961, and it is evident that further progress will be made as a result of last year's weather conditions.

To give further encouragement to the production of beet of higher sugar content, which reduces costs both for the growers and for the factories, the price differential for sugar content has been increased, with effect from the 1963 crop, to 10 shillings per one percent sugar content, above a basic 16 percent. This compares with seven shillings and 6 pence for each 1 percent above a basic 15 and a half percent in previous contracts. Plant breeders are actively engaged in improving their varieties to give a higher sugar content and juice purity, and growers continue to be encouraged to adopt cultural and manurial practices which are known to give the desired result. I emphasised last year, the problem presented to our factories by the considerable increase in beet yield brought about by agricultural advances. A winter such as this last, confirms the view I expressed then, that increase in capacity must remain the prime object of our technical advancement. Our capital expenditure programme, largely directed to this end, continues at a high level. In the last year, the main items of new plant were a boiler at Ely; power plant at Ely and Ipswich; filtration plant at Allscott, Nottingham and King's Lynn; continuous centrifugal's at Wissington; sugar silos at Ipswich, and increased beet storage capacity at Nottingham an Ipswich.

I also referred last year to our intention to produce the complete pulp output of a factory in the form of nuts. This was successfully accomplished, and the popularity of this product is such, that we intend this year, so to equip yet another large factory. In my circular dated the 7th of June, I told you of the Board's decision with the Ministry which had the object of resolving the present unsatisfactory status of the Corporation's shares. It is my intention to enlarge on this at the Annual General Meeting, and my statement will include a reference to future dividend policy.

The above are extracts from the circulated address of Sir Edmund Bacon, BT., O.B.E., T.D., J.P., Chairman, to be presented with the report and accounts for the year ended 31st of March 1963, at the twenty-seventh annual general meeting, to be held at Grosvenor House, London, W 1, on the 2nd of August,1963.

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Death of Mr. W H Lupson.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, August the 23rd, 1963.

The death occurred at his home on Tuesday, of Mr. William Henry Lupson, aged 63, of 40, Silver Street, Ely. He had been ill for some time. Born in Ely, he joined the Gloucester Regiment when he was fourteen and a half years old, and served in the First World War, as a private. Afterwards, he lived in Canada until 1924, when he returned to Ely, where he worked at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory as a Sugar boiler, until forced to retire with ill health eight years ago. The funeral took place at Ely Cemetery yesterday afternoon.

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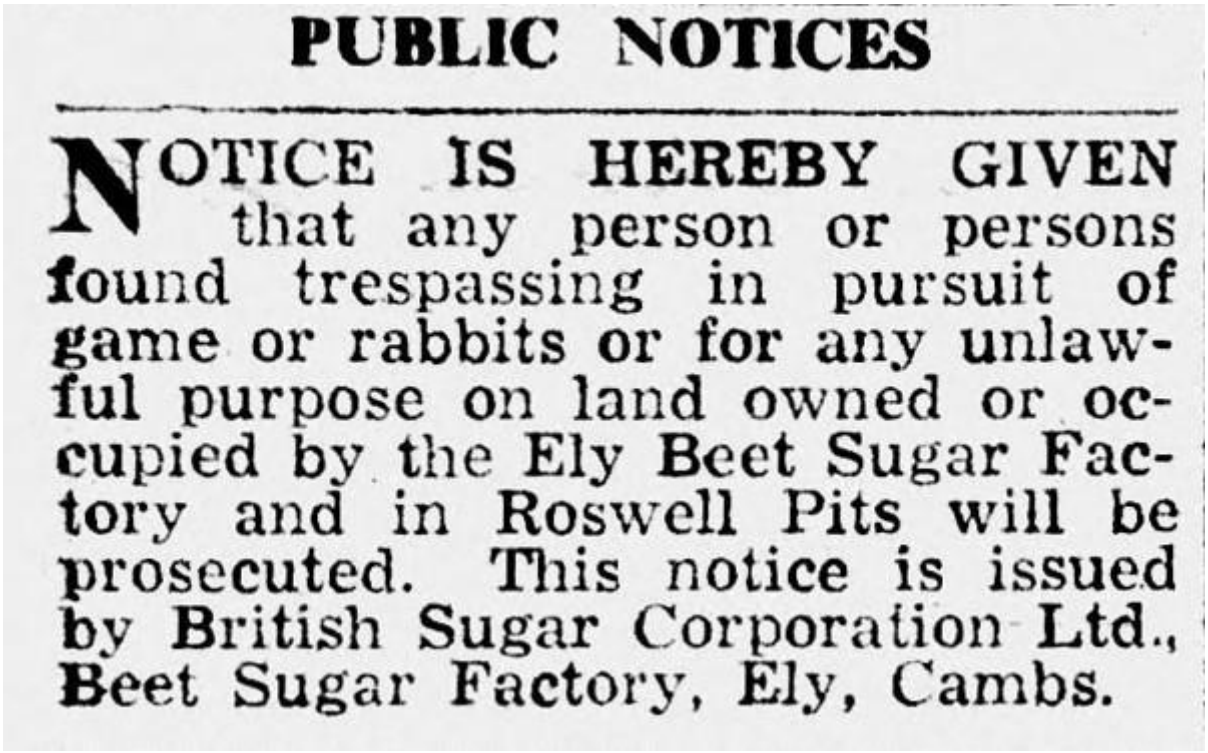
Public Notices.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 13th, 1963.

Notice is hereby given, that any person or persons found trespassing in pursuit of game or rabbits, or for any unlawful purpose, on land owned or occupied by the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, and in Roswell Pits, will be prosecuted. This notice is issued by British Sugar Corporation, Limited., Beet Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs.



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Sugar beet loads building up.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 27th, 1963.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, which opened in 1925, started its 39th campaign on Monday. Because of the delay, caused by adverse weather conditions, in completion of the corn harvest, beet supplies were slow coming in at first, but they have been gradually building up, and by early next week, the factory hopes to get into full swing.

About 150 loads were received on Monday, and the following day this had increased to 220 loads, a combined total of over 2,000 tons.

On Wednesday, when the campaign proper, --that is, slicing and processing, --began, 350 loads, representing about 2,000 tons, were delivered by farmers.

A spokesman said yesterday, (Thursday): “Supplies are increasing daily. As soon as we get over the weekend, and more farmers start lifting, we shall get on to full speed ahead early next week.”

Sugar content higher.

He said the average sugar content of beet so far received, was higher than at this time last season, the figure being 15.3, as against 14.2 in 1962.

“We should expect it to increase from now on,” said the spokesman.

By the time the campaign ends in four months’ time, something like half a million tons of beet will have passed through the factory, at an average of 4,200 tons daily.

A pre-campaign statement, issued by the factory, gave the news that it’s agricultural department had been sampling the beet crop since July, and had forecast an above average yield. It reported one of the healthiest crops on record, with quite reasonable sugar content, considering the weather.

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Average Sugar Content of Beet Over 16 Percent.

Cambridgeshire National Farmers Union Told.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 25th, 1963.

Average sugar content to date, of beet delivered to the Ely factory is 16.04 percent. Mr. P E Wedd, reported to the Executive Committee of the Cambridgeshire branch of the National Farmers Union, at Owen Webb House, Cambridge, on Tuesday.

The total tare was 12.46 lbs., including 2 lbs., loose soil and tops, and root weight, 645 grammes, per root.

At the Felsted factory, the average sugar content to date, was 16.71 percent, and the average total dirt tare, 15 1/2 lbs per hundredweight. This included 2 lbs loose soil and also tops. The root weight had increased slightly since the beginning of the campaign, and now stood at 744 and a half grammes, per root.

Mr. Wedd reminded growers, that they could see their samples taken and follow it through the factory, if they wished to do so.

Reporting on Headquarters Sugar Beet Committee meeting, Mr. J A Taylor, said that discussions were continuing in an effort to establish whether the 2 lbs loose soil allowance was justified, and a conclusion had been reached that the solution lay in resolving the various problems affecting the introduction of the probe sampler.

The resolution from the Cambridgeshire branch that, “owing to the variation in the germination of sugar beet seed, the Cambridge County Branch wish to urge that Headquarters should demand that all sugar beet seed, (whether natural or rubbed and graded), should have the germination stated on the bags,” was considered by Headquarters Sugar Beet Committee, who were informed that the Corporation had stated, that having regard to the short space of time between the receipt of the seed by the factories, and it's despatch to growers, it was a practical impossibility for them to meet the request.

The Executive Committee were not satisfied with this reply, and considered that this matter should continue to be pursued.

The resolution from the Cambridgeshire branch, requesting National Farmers Union Seeds Industries, to explore the possibility of entering the sugar beet seed industry, was reported to the Committee, and although the National Farmers Union Seeds Industries would be pleased to do this, it would be economically impossible for them to do so, within the foreseeable future.

***

Fenmen Lost One Shilling, Seven Pence a Ton, on Beet.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, March the 13th, 1964.

From all beet sugar factories has come news of record yields last season, as far as sugar content is concerned, yet in the Fenland, growers lost about one shilling and seven pence per ton.

The cause is held to be the basis of 16 percent sugar content at present in force, and at least one National Farmers Union Branch, Ely, is asking that the basis revert to 15 1/2 percent.

The Difference.

It has been pointed out by Mr. S R Hopkin, National Farmers Union Supervisor at the Ely factory, that in a low sugar year, the difference could be between 5 shillings and 7 shillings per ton.

The matter is to be brought before the Headquarters Sugar Beet Committee. It will be interesting to learn how this request is received, for the general view has been, that beet growers have been well satisfied with the present conditions.

***

Use of Beet Probe Sampler Explained.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, July the 10th, 1964.

The introduction of the new probe sampler at Ely Beet Factory for the coming sugar beet campaign was explained by Mr. Roger Hartley, at the Isle of Ely National Farmers Union Executive Committee meeting at March.

Mr. Hartley, a delegate to the National Farmers Union Sugar Beet Committee, said it had been agreed that the loose soil allowance would be reduced from 2 lbs to 1 lb per hundredweight at Ely, and sampling would be undertaken from one of six positions in the load.

The suggestion of a sliding scale for loose soil allowance had been discussed many times, and he thought growers using cleaner-loaders ought to be able to see some financial return for their efforts.

He thought that the factories could quite easily determine the dirt element, by comparing the overall throughput with the amount of sliced, washed beet.

He suggested that the exact figures should be ascertained during the 1964 to 1965 campaign, with a view to pressing for a sliding scale in the following season, and also, bearing in mind, that the loose soil allowance amounted to no less than £750,000, per annum.

The committee agreed to press for this statistical information.

Relating price to content.

Mr. S R Hopkin, co-delegate with Mr. Hartley, said no progress had yet been made about the branch's request for the standard price of sugar beet to be related to a sugar content of 15 ½ percent, instead of 16 percent as at present.

The explanation was that the change in the best price structure last year, reflected the trend towards quality production in agricultural commodities as a whole.

Mr Hopkin said the Fenland producer, with his comparatively low sugars, was 5 shillings per ton worse off under the present system. It had also to be borne in mind that seed had doubled in price, from 4 shillings to 8 shillings per lb.

It was agreed that the matter should be raised again at the end of the year, and in time for the price review.

***

A Fight to Get 5 Shillings per Ton on Their Beet.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, July the 24th, 1964.

The fight is to continue, for a revision of a system which places Fenland sugar beet producers at a disadvantage, compared with growers in other parts of the country, (writes our Group Farm Editor, Mr. W A James).

Regulation laying down a 16 percent sugar content, as basis for the standard price, has resulted in the Fenland grower being worse off by 5 shillings per ton.

So, the Isle of Ely National Farmers Union has decided to make another bid to get that percentage lowered to 15 1/2 percent.

The explanation given for the introduction of the 16 percent figure, was that it, “reflected the trend towards quality production in agricultural commodities as a whole.”

On the face of it, a reasonable explanation, but not one that is acceptable to a man who knows that he is losing on the deal. While this system remains, the Fenland producer, with his comparatively lower sugars, is going to be, “on the wrong side,” and the position is not made any easier, by the fact that seed has doubled in price, from 4 shillings to 8 shillings per pound.

Fighting Mood.

How far the branch will progress in this matter remains to be seen, but if the mood of the members is anything to go by, then a jolly good fight is to be made, to bring about the desired change.

Producers using the Ely Factory, have been anxious to learn the details of the new probe sampler being introduced at the factory in the forthcoming campaign.

Some enlightenment on this has been given by Mr. Roger Hartley, one of the Isle branch delegates to the National Farmers Union Sugar Beet Committee.

He reveals that after lengthy negotiations, it has been agreed the loose soil allowance be reduced, from 2 lbs to 1 lb per hundredweight at Ely, and that sampling be undertaken from one of six positions in the load.

The suggestion of a sliding scale for loose soil allowance has been discussed on many occasions, and Mr. Hartley considers that growers using cleaner-loaders ought to be able to see some financial returns for their efforts.

The Dirt.

He claims that the factories can easily determine the dirt element, by comparing the overall throughput with the amount of sliced, washed beet.

Having regard to the fact that loose soil allowance amounts to something like £750,000 per annum, Mr. Hartley has put forward the suggestion, –adopted by the Isle branch, –that the exact figures should be ascertained during the 1964 to 1965 season, so that pressure can be brought for a sliding scale in the following season. The eyes of many sugar beet growers will be on the Isle National Farmers Union branch as this battle is waged.

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Russian Job for Sugar Men.

The Newark Advertiser, Wednesday, September the 2nd, 1964.

“How does it suit me?” Mr. Keith Mayfield, (23), of Mercia Rd, Newark, asks Mr. Peter Meakin, (37), of the Bungalow, Main Road, Bleasby, as he tries on a Russian-style hat.

During the next 6 to 8 weeks, both men will become familiar with Russian clothes and habits. They are among a party of about a dozen sugar factory workers about to leave for behind the Iron Curtain, where they will help with the running-in of a new British-built factory in Southern Ukraine.

Mr Meakin is a foreman, and Mr Mayfield a charge-hand at the Newark factory of the British Sugar Corporation.

Both men are looking forward to the trip, although they expect it to be hard work.

Mr Meakin will be leaving his wife and two sons at home. “My wife wishes she was coming with me,” he said.

Married soon.

For Mr Mayfield, the overseas job will mean a short parting with his fiancée.” We are hoping to get married soon,” he said, “and this will be a great help in saving up to buy a house.”

The factory they are going to in Russia is about three times the size of the Newark one, where Mr Meakin has worked for the past 12 years, and where Mr Mayfield has been since leaving school.

But it has been designed on the same lines as the sugar factories in Britain.

Included in the party are a works manager from Ely, two shift superintendents from Nottingham and Essex, a chemist from Fife, and foremen and operators from Shropshire, Bardney in Lincolnshire, Bury Saint Edmunds, Cupar, Kidderminster, Nottingham and Peterborough.

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Sugar Beet Campaign One of Best for Years.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, September the 15th, 1964.

All signs point to one of the most successful sugar beet campaigns for a number of years, and a longer one than usual.

Healthy crops, a high sugar content, and forecasts of above average yields, have led factories to prepare for an exceptionally busy time, and it is expected that, in the majority of cases, slicing will not be completed until well into January.

It is anticipated that the campaign at the Lynn factory will go on until the end of January, and here, samples have shown an average sugar content of 16 percent. About 14 tons an acre is expected, compared with 12 and a half tons last year.

The news from Peterborough, is that samples have averaged 16 percent sugar content, more than 2 percent above the same period last year.

Sugar content from samples at the Ely factory is well above last year's at this time, with the estimated yield at 16 tons per acre.

At Wissington.

Continuance of the drought could have an effect upon eventual yields, and from various areas, the problem of lack of moisture has been raised.

In the Wissington area, there has been wilting of plants in some areas, but here again, the sugar content has been found to be slightly above the average. Yields are estimated at between 15 and 15 and a half tons per acre.

Wilting due to lack of water, especially on the lighter soils, is the problem that has arisen in the Bury Saint Edmunds factory area, but so far it has been found that the sugar content is 2 and a half percent higher than at this stage last year. Rain, of course, could quickly reduce this.

Most optimistic forecast comes from the South Lincolnshire area, where it is thought possible that the yield will be even more than the five-year average of 17.26 tons per acre in this area.

Reconstruction.

With sugar percentages at a good level, and little wilting taking place in the area, the Spalding factory looks to a very successful campaign, both from quantity and quality.

A major programme of reconstruction at the Spalding factory has meant that it has not been possible as yet to fix an opening date for the campaign, but it is expected that the factory will be able to start operations at the same time as neighbouring factories.

At Ely, there will be great interest in the use of the probe sampler. It has already been announced that half the intake will be done in this manner, and the other half in the traditional way, so that returns from the two methods can be compared at the end of the campaign.

The opening dates of the various beet factories are: today, Kelham, next Monday, Peterborough, Wissington, Lynn, (afternoon), Ely, Ipswich, Felsted, Cantley and Bardney: next Tuesday, Bury Saint Edmunds: September the 25th, Brigg.

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Your Beet, The Best for Years.

Factories ready.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, September the 18th, 1964.

All signs point to one of the most successful sugar beet campaigns for a number of years and a longer one than usual, (writes our farming editor, Mr. W A James).

Healthy crops, a high sugar content, and forecast of above-average yields, have led factories to prepare for an exceptionally busy time.

And it is expected that, in the majority of cases, slicing will not be completed until well into January.

The news from Peterborough is that samples have averaged 16 percent sugar content, more than 2 percent above the same period last year. Yields also are above the five-year average, at 14 and a half, to 15 tons per acre.

It is anticipated that the campaign at the King's Lynn factory will go on until the end of January, and here, samples have shown an average sugar content of 16 percent. About 14 tons an acre is expected, compared with 12 and a half tons last year.

Sugar content from samples at the Ely factory is well above last year's at this time, with the estimated yield at 16 tons per acre. Continuance of the drought could have an effect upon eventual yields, and from various areas, the problems of lack of moisture has been raised.

Wilting.

In the Wissington area, there has been wilting of plants in some areas, but here again, the sugar content has been found to be slightly above the average. Yields are estimated to be between 15 and 15 and a half tons per acre. Wilting due to lack of water, especially on the lighter soils, is the problem that has arisen in the Bury Saint Edmunds factory area, but so far it has been found that the sugar content is 2 and a half percent higher than at this stage last year. Rain, of course, could quickly reduce this.

At Ely, there will be great interest in the use of the probe sampler. It has already been announced that half the intake will be done in this manner, and the other half in the traditional way, so that returns from the two methods can be compared at the end of the campaign.

The Patent, (GB897199) for the Probe Sampler is on the following pages.

Published May the 23rd, 1962.

Patent Number GB897199.

Inventor: Donald Jack Ennis.

Provisional Specification.

Improvements in or relating to Apparatus for Sampling.

Published May the 23rd, 1962.

We, Cocksedge and Company, Limited, a British Company, of PO Box 41, Grey Friars Road, Ipswich, England, do hereby declare this invention to be described in the following statement.

This invention relates to apparatus for sampling from a load of material and is more particularly although, not solely, intended for taking a sample from a load of sugar-beet in the form of a local vertical cross-section. An object of the invention, is to enable this core sample to be obtained with minimum damage to the beets. This is important, because damage to the beets may subsequently reduce the sugar content thereof, and since growers are paid on the basis of sugar content, they would naturally object to an incorrectly low indication of the sugar.

According to the invention, the apparatus comprises a vertical tube, at least one scoop plate movably carried in relation to the tube at the lower end thereof, and means for rotating the tube and moving it downwards so that the beets or other material are scooped up the scoop plate and moved into the tube, whereupon the tube can be raised, and the contents discharged, by moving the scoop plate away from the end of the tube.

If desired, a pair of scoop plates are provided, having their leading edges lower than the remainder of the plates, and carried by means located in the tube and movable to bring the plates below the tube to a considerable distance, e.g. at least greater than the diameter of the tube.

A constructional form of the invention will now be described by way of example. The tube may be about twelve to eighteen inches in diameter and five to eight feet long. The lower end of the tube is cut away on two vertical lines, offset from each other 180° and by two helical lines, each connecting the top of one vertical cut line to the bottom of the next. The two vertical lines form leading edges.

Two helical scoop plates are provided, which have a driving sampling seat on their outer margins on the helical lower edges of the tube. The lower end of each plate carries an upstanding leading-edge plate, the rear edge of which seats against a vertical cut line on the tube, and the forward edge of each is concave. The width of the scoop plates may be about one quarter to one third of the radius of the tube. The trailing end of the scoop plate is spaced

a small distance from the leading plate of the other scoop plate. Each scoop plate is supported by two vertical rods which may be hollow, one rod being connected to the top of the leading plate while the other is connected to the margin of the scoop plate near its controlling end. The four rods extend up into the interior of the tube, and their upper ends are connected to the ram of a pneumatic jack.

The upper end of the tube and the jack cylinder are mounted in a carriage which is vertically movable on vertical guide rails carried by a laterally movable framework. This framework is provided with rollers which seat on horizontal rails carried by a fixed frame. This fixed frame is supported by ground engaging plates and stanchions so that the lorry full of beets to be sampled can be driven below the framework and tube when the latter is raised.

The tube is mounted rotatably on the carriage by means of suitable bearings. The upper end of the tube is connected to the lower end of a vertical hollow driving shaft that is mounted rotatably in the carriage and contains the pneumatic jack.

The laterally travelling framework carries an electric motor which drives the framework laterally from a sampling position to a discharge position, and for this purpose is provided with a chain drive and chain racks and pinions. The tube is raised and lowered by a reversible electric motor mounted on the travelling frame. This motor has twin output shafts fitted with double winch drums. From one half of each drum rises a lifting cable and from the other half rises a lowering cable. These cables are wound in opposite directions so that one is let out as the other is let in. The cables run from suitable pulleys and are connected to the vertically movable carriage.

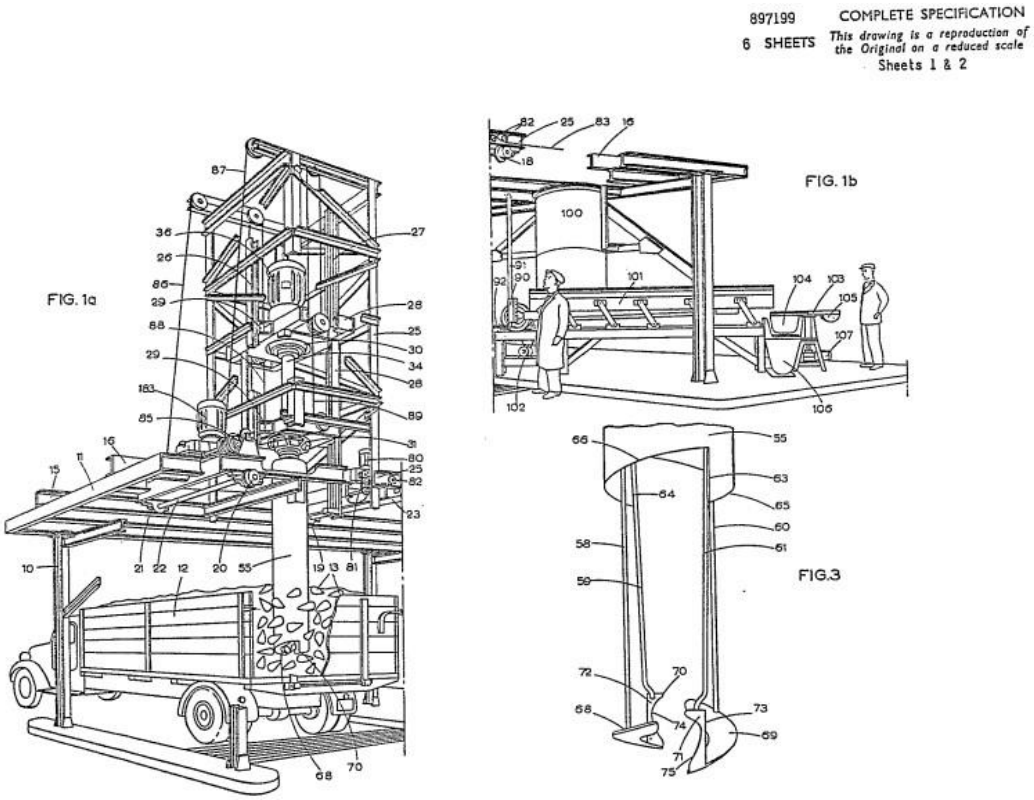
The tube rotation and vertical lift, the lateral traversing movement and a pneumatic jack are all electrically controlled from a common button switch box. This box is mounted on the lower end of a vertical rod, which also carries a pointer at its lower end. The operator can raise or lower this rod to control the depth to which the tube is moved during sampling, the rod effecting this control by means of a limit switch.

The fixed frame carries a hopper at the discharging position. The lower end of the hopper is located from the inlet end of a shaking feeder. The feeder is driven by the electric motor and multiple belt drive. Under the outlet end of the feeder is a sample dividing device consisting of a table rotated on the vertical axis and carrying a collecting pan. This pan may collect, for example, one-sixth of the total quantity delivered by the tube, the remainder falling into a container and being returned to the lorry, or forwarded to the factory process.

In operation, the lorry is driven below the tube and the tube is moved downwards and simultaneously rotated down to the predetermined depth. The tube is then raised and the travelling framework is moved to the discharge position over the hopper. The scoop plates are then moved downwards by the pneumatic jack, allowing the beets to fall down the tube into the hopper. The scoop plates are then raised and the tube and travelling framework are moved back to the sampling position.

For the Applicants: –
Matthews, Haddan and Company,
Chartered Patent Agents,
31 to 32 Bedford St,
Strand, London, WC2.

Illustrations of the Probes, below.

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Probe Sampling at Ely Beet Factory.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 25th, 1964.

Sugar content of beet on the opening day of the Ely factory this season was at least one and a half percent higher than last year, Mr. J A Taylor reported to the Executive Committee of the Cambridgeshire branch of the National Farmers Union, on Tuesday.

Reporting on a meeting of the Transport Liaison Committee, Mr Taylor said that for the 1963 to 1964 season, average yield per acre had been 14.65 tons, and average sugar content 16.23 percent.

Only 6 percent of loads had been sent in by rail. During that season, 10 percent of all loads were side sampled.

This year, it was proposed that there would be no side sampling except in emergencies, as all loads would be probe sampled by the new Cocksedge probe sampler.

Because of the way in which the sampler worked, it was important for the farmer to mark obstructions in the lorry with paint or some other means, and the bottom of the lorry depth would have to be known.

In view of the probe sampling, loose soil allowance would be reduced from 2 lbs to 1 lb, but if any other method of sampling had to be used, the 2 lb allowance would be made.

Growers were recommended to send in their loads about 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m., or from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., when there should be no hold up. The factory was to be open on Sundays, and there would be a request for volunteers to load sugar beet on Sundays.

Reporting on a similar meeting at the Felsted factory, Mr. P E Wedd, said that all Felstead growers had received letters about dirt tare, which had been very high last year, and it was hoped that this would not recur.

Sugar content on the opening day of the 1964 to 1965 season had been an average of 19.1 percent, with dirt and top tare, an average of 7.25 lbs per hundredweight.

This was a record amount of sugar for the factory on the opening day.

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Job ends in Russia.

Experts return.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, November the 13th, 1964.

Utility foreman at Bury Saint Edmunds beet sugar factory, Mr. Robin Revens, returned on Sunday after nearly two months in Russia.

Mr. Revens was among a party of 14 sugar factory technologists who went to Russia to help with the running-in of a new British built sugar factory in southern Ukraine.

The party included a works manager from the Ely factory, 2 shift superintendents from Nottingham and Felsted, a chemist from Cupar, (Fife), and foremen and sugar process operators from Bury Saint Edmunds, Allscott; (Salop), Bardney; (Lincolnshire), Cupar, Kidderminster, Newark, Nottingham and Peterborough.

The factory has been designed on the same lines as the factories in Britain.

First trip.

Mr. Revens, of 37, Mildenhall Road, Bury Saint Edmunds, who is married with two young children, has been at the Bury Saint Edmunds factory for the past 15 years.

This was his first trip abroad for the factory. He said he found the life in Russia very enjoyable, and the people there, very friendly.

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Beet Harvester Demonstration.

The Spalding Guardian, Friday, January the 8th, 1965.

Their entire range of seven sugar beet harvesters will be demonstrated by F A Standen and Sons, Limited, on Monday and Tuesday, January the 11th and 12th, at Mr. Stanley Hopkins Adelaide Farm, Prickwillow Road, Ely.

The site is next to the Ely Factory of the British Sugar Corporation, and the demonstration will be from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm daily.

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British Sugar Corporation Limited.

Report on interim period.

The Scotsman, Monday, February the 1st, 1965.

Under the new financial arrangements approved by the shareholders at the Extraordinary General Meeting, held on the 25th of March, 1964, and referred to in the Director's report, it was proposed that the Corporation's financial year should in future end on the 30th September. My report to shareholders, therefore, deals with the half year to 30th of September, 1964, during which time little processing of beet took place.

Lord Champion, one of our Government Directors, has resigned from the board upon being appointed Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Minister without Portfolio. We warmly congratulate Lord Champion on his appointment. At the same time, we are extremely sorry to lose the benefit of his wisdom and experience, which have been of such great value to us during the five years he has been with us.

We welcome Mr. A V Hilton, JP, who has succeeded Lord Champion as a Government Director. Mr Hilton was Member of Parliament for South-West Norfolk from 1959 to 1964, and is acting President of the National Union of Agricultural Workers.

During the period under review, Mr. J Campbell Macdonald, after serving the industry for nearly 40 years, ceased to be a member of the Management Committee upon reaching normal retiring age. Mr Macdonald has given outstanding service as Chief Technical Officer and his contribution to the technical development of the Corporation over the past 16 years has been of the highest order. I am glad to say that he will continue to serve as a member of our Board.

We continued to install new equipment at our factories aimed at giving a higher daily production capacity and increasing efficiency. The programme included the replacement of obsolete plant where necessary. Among the new installations were beet reception facilities at five factories, a large boiler unit and a new extraction plant at Spalding, two automatic lime kilns at Cantley, and a modern sugar packeting plant at Cupar. A bulk white sugar silo was erected at Cupar, and an additional silo at Kings Lynn.

On the 1st of January, 1964, the price of raw Sugar c.i.f., (Cost, Insurance, and Freight) U.K. was 88 shillings per hundredweight. By the 31st of March, 1964, it had fallen to 62 shillings and 6 pence per hundredweight, but by the end of September, it had declined to 32 shillings, 6 pence per hundredweight, and further reductions have occurred since that date.

The main cause of the decline has been the anticipation of substantial increases in sugar production which are now actually taking place. It is not generally realised how quickly cane

and beet producers can increase their output, when stimulated by a period of shortage and high prices. The International Sugar Council estimate that in 1965, world production will be considerably in excess of demand, but at the same time, suggest that some of the excess may easily be absorbed in replenishing stocks which had been reduced to very low levels.

The above are extracts from the circulated statement of Sir Edmund Bacon, BT., K.B.E., TD., J.P., Chairman, to be presented with the report and accounts for the six months ended 30th of September, 1964, at the twenty ninth annual general meeting, to be held at the Park Lane Hotel, London, W1, on the 23rd of February, 1965.

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Ely Factory Staff Dine.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, April the 30th, 1965.

Former members of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory staff, now working at other British Sugar Corporation factories, returned to Ely on Friday for the Sports and Social clubs' annual dinner and dance.

They came from York, Newark, Peterborough and Bury Saint Edmunds.

The dinner was attended by 121 members and guests, and Mr. S Bonnett, the club chairman, presided.

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Monogerm Seeds That Save Costs.

Farming by Douglas Oliver.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, July the 9th, 1965.

Beet seed that produces a single plant and not a clump, now rival conventional seed in trials, says a Cambridge man, who has been responsible for some of the testing.

These monogerm, or single plant seeds have the great advantage, they need not require thinning, –a troublesome and expensive operation.

As the officer for fodder and root crop trials at the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, Huntingdon Road, Mr. L A Willey, has supervised many trials of the new varieties of seed.

Low yields.

There were once two real difficulties with monogerm seed, he points out, –low yields and proneness to bolting: (seeding). Yields three or four years ago were about 20 percent down on normal control varieties.

As for bolting, Mr Willey says: "In the early days, these seeds were almost impossible, although you might get by if you sowed late." One of the causes of bolting in normal seed is sowing too early.

Nowadays the picture is changed. “Almost all the major breeding firms now have material in trials which is acceptable,” says this expert.

Shade below.

Two varieties are most promising, and of these, he comments: “The most promising are well within sight of the average of the recommended list.”

In their tests, N.I.A.B have used as a control, a normal variety, which is above average.

One of the two most-promising monogerms, out of about 8 on trial, has produced yields about the same as the control, while the other has come just a shade below.

These two should finish their trials at the end of this year, and then stand a chance of getting on the N.I.A.B recommended list, subject to such things as availability of supplies.

“Over the next three or four years, I would expect a fairly big swing to Monogerm beet,” says Mr Willey.

Price and availability were going to be the deciding factors, but he thought firms who had varieties on trial would be multiplying the seed as quickly as they could. And, as more people went over to monogerm, the price might come down.

But one of the troubles on price was that seed firms were going to sell less seed, –and the heavy cost of plant breeding had to be recovered by them.

When most farmers are using monogerms seed, Mr Willey thinks three main patterns of growing will develop. Some will sow to a stand with mono germ.

Some will sow mainly to a stand but take out a few plants if they have to. And some will sow heavily, and thin out by machine.

Beet Factory.

Sowing to a final stand, was the slogan on which monogerm first came in. But Mr Willey thinks it has its risks, for it leaves no safety margin if the weather is unkind or pests a nuisance.

The agriculturist at Ely Sugar Beet Factory, Mr. D Bradford, says monogerm beet will solve straight away the speed with which the whole job can be finished.

He points to three advantages it will bring. “If you can precision drill a crop with monogerm, whatever the spacing, the singling problem is not going to be so acute.

If a plant has no competition, it is going to be stronger and healthier.”

The third advantage is: “Monogerm will lend itself better to mechanical thinning, because a machine put through, is not going to leave doubles and trebles that have to be hand singled.”

He agrees with Mr Willey’s forecast of the three techniques that may develop with monogerm beet, and adds;

“Trying to drill to a stand is a dangerous practice, when one bears in mind there are factors which can reduce that final stand. If you are forced into it by labour demand, you might have to attempt it.”

Varieties.

Mr. Bradford says growers might accept 95 percent of the yield of the top commercial multi germ varieties for the sake of monogerm's advantages. But anything worse than 5 percent loss might be questionable.

Many fen farmers seem able to handle a crop satisfactorily at the moment, and Mr Bradford doubts whether these people would be prepared to accept even five percent drop.

He believes this is the transitional stage for Monogerm beet, and adds this year's results will tell.

Mr. Willey has a look at some of the N.I.A.B. trial plots of monogerm sugar beet.

A photograph on the left, shows Mr. Willey inspecting the plants.

Caption reads: Mr. Willey has a look at some of the N.I.A.B. trial plots of monogerm sugar beet.

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Modernisation Plan for Sugar Beet Factories.

The Grimsby Evening Telegraph, Wednesday, September the 1st, 1965.

A modernisation scheme at Bardney, and the use of an experimental sampling probe at Brigg, will, it is hoped, result in a speeding up of operations at both the British Sugar corporations Lincolnshire Sugar Beet factories this year.

The scheduled date for the opening of the campaign at Bardney is September the 20th. The Brigg factory will go into production a week later, writes Peter Hopper.

The Sampling probe is still an experimental machine. It was used extensively last year by two factories in other counties, and was found reliable after "teething" troubles.

Mr. C W Hutchinson, the general manager at Brigg, told me the probe would be a faster and more accurate method of taking samples from lorries loaded with beet.

A permanent fixture, the equipment can take out an 84 lb sample from the top to the bottom of the load. Previously, this had been done by hand.

Fears that it may go through the floor of the delivery vehicles are dispelled, by the fact that it can be set to the exact depth of the load.

“The machine is a great deal more accurate than hand sampling,” said Mr. Hutchinson.

This year's crop, he went on, looked promising, and it was expected that the yield would equal the last five-year average.

Expectation.

Sugar content, however, would be slightly down on last year, unless there was a warm, dry spell up to the harvest.

The Brigg factory is expecting to take about 300,000 tons of beet this year, the yield being estimated at just over 14 tons to the acre.

Mr. Hutchinson said the slightly bigger acreage allowed in Lincolnshire, was to offset a deficiency in the West Country.

Work on the modernisation scheme at the Bardney factory is still going on, and it will be a race against time to complete it by September the 20th.

Bigger Tonnage.

The general manager, Mr. J Needham, told me it was hoped the new equipment would bring a 25 percent increase in the tonnage accepted at the factory.

This would mean an in-take up to 400,000 tons this year, allowing for an estimated yield of just over 15 tons to the acre.

The old beet intake system has been virtually replaced by new roads, weighbridges, and a large increase in the storage capacity.

New equipment includes a slicing machine, a diffuser for extracting sugar, a pulp processor, a lime kiln, two boilers, a chimney stack, and a turbine which will double the production of electricity.

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62,000 Tons of Sugar.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 18th, 1966.

The last load of 62,000 tons of sugar produced in the 41st campaign that has just ended at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, left the factory last week.

In the five-months that the campaign had been in progress, 493,000 tons of beet were delivered in 65,794 lorry loads, from which the 62,000 tons of sugar, nearly 41,000 tons of dried pulp. and 8,000 tons of molasses were produced.

Average.

Because of the wet summer and autumn, the sugar content of the beet was, at 15.13 percent, 2 percent less than last year, but a factory spokesman said on Wednesday, this was considered quite satisfactory, and about average.

He said the winter had been one of the muddiest for years, and the average eight-ton load of beet contained over three quarters of a ton of soil, and towards the end of last month, this content was even higher.

The total soil received during the campaign was over 50,000 tons, and the spokesman added that the factory hoped to start loading this out to those who wish to collect it, early in April.

Below is an advertisement for ICI “Betrox”, the Sodium Fertiliser for Sugar Beet.

DOUBLE BOOST FOR BEET
ICI
BETROX
THE SODIUM FERTILISER FOR SUGAR BEET
112 LB NET
ICI
NEW
4
NITROGEN 20%
P.O. 14%
POTASH 14%
Increase sugar with 'BETROX'
higher total yield with ICI New No. 4
Add the two together and you've got maximum profit from this year's crop. 'Betrox'—rich in vital sodium—builds in extra sugar. Can give you at least £4 additional clear profit an acre! ICI New No. 4 (20.14.14) supplies the essential nitrogen, phosphate and potash to get your beet off to a strong start and sees it through to a high yield. Apply 3–4 cwt 'Betrox' per acre three to four weeks before sowing (unless you've already put it down last autumn) and 4–5 cwt ICI New No. 4 with the beet. Give your beet the double boost that brings maximum profits to you. Order 'Betrox' and ICI New No. 4 from your merchant today.
(On soils well supplied with phosphate and potash, ICI No. 2 (22.11.11) may be applied with equally good results).
'Betrox' Depots: You can get 'Betrox' through your merchant —even at short notice—from local ICI stores at Bedford, Elmstead (Nr. Colchester), Felstead, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Norton (Nr. Bury St. Edmunds), Norwich, Saffron Walden, Wimblington.
Bags of farming experience
ICI

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Beet Crop Try-Out.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, July the 29th, 1966.

For some years now, local farmers have been saying: “If only we could get a good monogerm sugar beet seed, much of our labour problem would be solved.”

It is becoming plain, that monogerm seed that has recently become available, is on a par with yields of average multigerm seed. That gives additional point to some trials being conducted by the Ely factory, of the British Sugar Corporation, at Thriplow Farms Limited, Fowlmere.

The idea behind the trials, is to compare normal hand hoeing and machine thinning, with no further hand work, –that is, total mechanisation, –on crops drilled at different spacings. This week, farmers had a chance to see some of the results.

Mr. D R Roebuck, trials officer at Ely, said during the trials, that he did not know whether complete mechanisation would ever come in fully, because many growers will consider wider spacing as an alternative. “Wider spacing is perhaps more acceptable, but has many disadvantages,” he said.

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Beet Crop Prospects Are Good.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, August the 5th, 1966.

Prospects are good for a better than average season in the flat green sugar beet fields of Cambridgeshire and surrounding counties, the agriculturist at the Ely beet sugar factory, Mr D Bradford tells me.

“The indications are that the sugar beet crop will be heavy this year, " said Mr Bradford.

The Ely factory started taking samples in a random selection of fields in their area early in July. “Root weight has certainly been above last year, " said Mr Bradford.

Quick sprays.

What's more, last year saw a good crop of 16 tons an acre average, –so the prospects this time are for a better-than-average, sixteen and a half ton an acre.

But Mr Bradford said this does not get near the boom year of 1960, –the heaviest on record, when the average crop was 18.9 ton an acre.

“We expect to open the factory about September the 26th,” he said. “But this is depending on the corn harvest. On the face of it, at the moment, the corn may be backward and difficult to get.”

“This year the beet crop is healthy, and there is not a lot of virus, said Mr Bradford, although there were a lot of aphids, the majority of people sprayed fairly quickly, and that seems to have prevented any spread.”

Another good feature is that there are not many bolters, (seeded beet), this year.

People planted fairly early, –a very high percentage drilled in March and April.

Mr Bradford said that breeders had developed improved strains which were less susceptible to bolting.

The Ely factory's figures show that 10 percent of the acreage this year has been drilled with the new monogerm varieties, as against very little drilled last year. These strains grow a single plant instead of a cluster, the idea being to reduce singling problems.

Very little monogerm was drilled last year, and the present figures indicate that growers are going cautiously ahead. British Sugar Corporation trials showed that the best strains of monogerm were about 6 percent down in yield, compared with the top commercial varieties. But it remains to be seen how they behave this year.

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City Guarded on Sugar Beet Forecast.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Friday, August the 5th, 1966.

The prospects for the Fen sugar beet harvest are good, says Mr D Bradford, agriculturist at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory. Peterborough opinion is more guarded.

At the city's British Sugar Corporation factory, the manager, Mr Irvin Rose, said: “It's a bit too early to make any predictions. We have just started taking field samples.

Anything could happen in the next month,” he felt, but the factory would probably open as usual, at the end of September.

At the Peterborough office of the National Farmers Union, branch secretary Mr J Davey said, “general prospects look quite good.”

Over at Ely, Mr Bradford was more exact. They expect this year's yield to be at least half-a-ton per acre above the average for the last five years.

Yield well-up.

Ely started taking field samples in July. “So far, it looks like there will be a yield of about 16.5 tons an acre, --the yield last year was 16.1," said Mr Bradford.

The five-year average is 15.75 tons, so the yield should be well up on this figure.

He attributed the increase to improved sowing measures in the region, – two-inch spacing, instead of 1.5 inch, and to the early and effective spraying of aphids.

They hope to open the factory on September the 26th, but this depends on the timing of the corn harvest. At the present, this looks as though it will be late.

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Sugar Beet: Bumper Crop Expected.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, September the 16th, 1966.

A bumper crop is expected to be processed at Ely Beet Sugar factory this season. The factory opens for processing on September the 26th, --and an official tells me that crops this year should produce a good yield.

At Ely, the staff are preparing to process more than half a million tons of beet, grown mostly in Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, on 32,000 acres, by 2,000 farmers.

If a start can be made on September the 26th, there is a reasonable hope that the crop will be safely in the bag, –as sugar, –by the end of January. New labour-saving machinery in the British Sugar Corporation factory will aid the staff in their mammoth task.

62,000 tons.

The yield this year will probably be more than the 16.14 tons per acre harvested last year, perhaps even sixteen and a half tons, says the official.

“Samples from crops in the area, which have been analysed weekly for the past eight weeks, point to a slightly better sugar content than that of 1965, even after all the rain that has fallen this summer,” he says.

The 200-shift workers and 140-day workers expect to make over 62,000 tons of sugar during the next four months. The average person consumes about 116 lb of sugar a year, –mainly in manufactured food and drink.

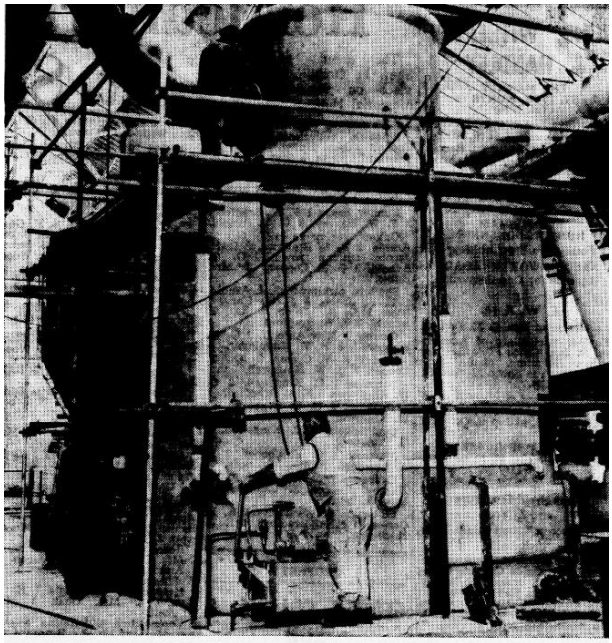
Unlike most of the other sugar factories, Ely does not produce the finished product, but sends over 500 tons of raw sugar daily in bulk to other factories or refineries. Farmers, mainly in the cattle-rearing areas, take most of the 40,000 tons of molassed pulp produced in an average season.

New plant.

New labour-saving plant installed this year includes an automatic centrifugal for spinning sugar from the syrup, to replace two old ones, and a large vacuum pan for boiling the syrup, which will supplant two smaller and less efficient ones.

The new pan will give greater capacity than the other two together.

Nowadays, 90 percent of the growers have beet harvesters, –on a good day these may lift over three acres of crop. The factory accept between 650 and 700 lorry loads daily; so considerable quantities must be stored on the farms until delivery can be made.



The new vacuum pan for boiling syrup in sugar beet processing at the Ely factory.

A photograph from the newspaper, and caption is on the left.

The photograph shows the new vacuum pan, and the caption reads:

The new vacuum pan for boiling syrup in sugar beet processing at the Ely factory.

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Mild Spell has its drawbacks.

Farming by Douglas Oliver.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 10th, 1967.

This winter's genial warmth has created an unusual problem for farmers in Cambridgeshire and surrounding counties, –some of their crops are growing too fast.

I've been out in many fen fields in the past week, and seen a delicate dusting of green as the winter wheat comes thrusting through, deceived by the false promise of spring.

When I talked about this to the County Advisory Officer, Mr G J Clark, he said, “In a sense, the winter wheats are growing far too fast. There is a distinct danger that they could get far too winter-proud.”

The snag is that so much growth too soon can mean weakness in the plant, which puts out too much leaf in the early stages.

Then, if cold weather comes about April, the plant cannot withstand it so well, because much of its strength has gone into the earlier leaf production.

“It wouldn't do any harm for the wheats to be cut back a bit by a winter frost, " said Mr Clarke.

The problem is not so great with the winter barley, –and in any case the acreage of this is smaller than usual. Mr Clarke thought some farmers this spring would sow spring wheat instead of barley, –there are fears of a national barley glut.

Waterlogged.

But the mild weather has had a kinder aspect. It has enabled cultivations to get going earlier than had been anticipated.

Farmers throughout the county have been able to catch up with the problem they had been left, by waterlogged fields at the end of last year.

“It's been marvellous for cultivations, and Fenman in particular have been cracking ahead. I have noticed quite a number of tractors and ploughs out,” said Mr Clarke.

The fine week has also helped to solve locally a problem remaining from winter, –large amounts of sugar beet left in the ground.

With the land drying out in the sunshine, farmers have been able to get the machines on the soil and get up the rest of the crop.

Flurry.

In this they were very lucky, for the Ely beet sugar factory closed on Tuesday with a flurry of activity from farmers at the last minute.

A factory spokesman said that only about 10 acres of beet had been left underground, which was pretty low.

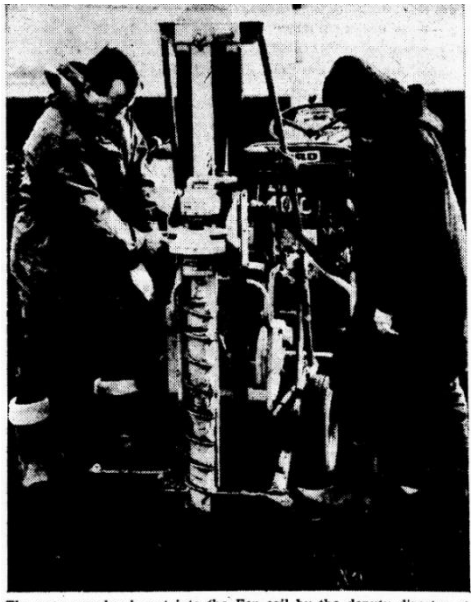
In the last few days, the Ely factory accepted much beet from all over the country, as well as from local farmers. “Things have cleared up fairly well, " said the spokesman.

Machine Tackles Fen Peat Riddle.

A new earth sampling machine from Australia is helping an experimental farm at Mepal to continue to find out how and why the peat soils of Cambridgeshire are disappearing, –and what to do to save them.

The sampler is helping workers at the Arthur Rickwood Experimental Husbandry Farm to build up a soil profile of the land in their charge. This was the farm that the late Alderman Rickwood gave to the nation a few years ago so that ways might be found of saving the country's valuable fen soils.

The farm director, Mr Percy Cross, told me: “The purpose of the machine is to take out a core of soil so that its profile can be examined.” This survey of the whole farm is an essential preliminary to future work on conservation.



*The new sampler is put into the Fen soil by the deputy director at the Arthur Rickwood farm, Mr. Robert Wickens, and a scientific assistant, Miss Helen Martin.*

More precise.

The sampler, which cost nearly £700, was developed simultaneously in America and Australia. It gives more precise measurements of soil levels than by driving in a tube or an auger, because of its double-tube arrangement, with digging screw outside and split, hollow corer.

When it is removed from the ground after digging to the required depth, the inner corer tube is removed.

It can then either be opened out to reveal a complete soil core, or a knife can be run down the lengthwise split to give a cross section.

A photograph and caption on the left:

Caption reads: The new sampler is put into the fen soil by the deputy director at the Arthur Rickwood farm, Mr Robert Wickens, and a scientific assistant, Miss Helen Martin.

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A Sheet Anchor Among Fen Crops.

By D R Roebuck, a British Sugar Corporation Trials Officer based at Ely.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 24th, 1967.

The sugar beet crop is a familiar sight in the Fen area now, but it is a fairly recent addition to the agronomy of the area, for the crop really began in the Fens in 1925 when the Ely factory was opened by the Anglo-Dutch Company.

This new crop quickly became popular and by the second season, the contracted acreage increased from 5,941 to 17,501, giving a final acreage yield of around 10 tons per acre. In this

year, 66 percent of the crop was delivered by rail, 20 percent by water, and only 14 percent by road.

By the time the British Sugar Corporation Limited was formed in 1936, the contracted acreage had settled around the 26,000 mark, with the average return still around 10 tons an acre. The Fen Farmer had a good cash crop, guaranteed market and price, with a monthly cheque for beet delivered. This acted as a good sheet anchor during the farming depression.

The outlook appeared good, but already the effect of over-cropping, and lack of rotation was beginning to be felt. Many crops in these days failed because of attack by pygmy mangold beetle, –a very small beetle that attacks the hypocotyl, --at, or just below, ground level.

Often, beet was grown in the same field for years, and as the adult beetle over-winters in the soil, they increased tremendously in numbers because they had a host plant to feed on each year. This beetle soon became a menace to the establishment of a good crop.

Also, in 1935 at Chatteris, an even more serious threat to the crop had been found, –sugar beet eelworm.

The British Sugar Corporation were alive to the dangers, and laid down in the contract a rotational clause imposing a break of two years between beet crops.

Until the middle 1940's there was little change in the method of growing the crop. All work in the spring, the chopping out and singling, and the pulling and topping in the autumn, was done by hand.

Two important changes were to take place at this time. The first was in 1943, with the introduction of the Sugar Beet Eelworm Order.

This order laid down an area where it was illegal to grow sugar beet, or any other susceptible crop, (red beet, mangold, mustard), unless there had been a break of at least two years. Fields were inspected, and classified as infested or sick, and in these fields the imposed rotational break was longer.

This and subsequent orders managed to control the spread of eelworm, but it is still a threat to the crop which has to be lived with.

There are no economical chemical methods of control, and the only practical method of keeping the eelworm in check is by a rotation that denies this pest its host plant.

That these controls must be enforced is proved by the fact that eelworm population is increased tenfold by one crop of beet, and is decreased by only 50 percent during one year's break.

It is interesting to note that potatoes are liable to attack by the potato root eelworm, and no control measures have ever been applied to this crop. As a direct result of this, many fields in the Fen cannot grow a good crop of potatoes, because of the extremely high eelworm population.

Increased.

The second important change in the method of growing the crop was the introduction of the mechanical beet harvester. This was the first step towards the mechanisation of the beet crop.

This new concept of harvesting quickly caught on and in 1950, the local firm of F A Standen produced 100 harvesters, and by 1956, 50 percent of the total crop was being lifted by machine.

In these ten years, the tonnage per acre at Ely factory had steadily increased, and there were only two years in this period when the crop failed to produce over 11 tons per acre.

These two poor years, it is now known, were due to virus yellows: –a disease which then was not fully understood, and over which then had no control. On an infected plant, the leaves become brittle, turn yellow and growth is retarded.

Like eelworm, it would appear at the moment that the industry will have to learn to live with virus yellows. Much has been learnt regarding the movement of the aphid, time of spraying, efficient systemic insecticides, and a variety of beet that is partially tolerant to virus yellows, but to completely control the aphid carrier, would appear to be an impossible task.

Meanwhile, the knowledge of beet husbandry increased. Higher yielding varieties were available, better-quality seed gave a greater percentage of single plants per cluster, fertiliser requirements were better understood, and the whole aspect of the crop became more scientific, as indeed did all farming at this time.

By 1956, farming was a business, no longer a way of life.

Breakthrough.

To keep pace with the increased output from the farmers due to their increased skills and knowledge, the Ely factory was modernised in 1960. A new diffuser was built, giving the factory a throughput of 4,000 tons per 24 hours:

New yard facilities were constructed to allow for an increase of tonnage delivered by road. By this time, 91 percent of deliveries were by road, 6 percent by rail, and 3 percent by water: – the last year water borne beet was received.

In the early 1960's, the whole farming Industry began to feel the effects of the drift of labour away from the farm. The farmer overcame these difficulties by using new techniques in the beet crop.

Precision drills, which space the seeds at a predetermined distance, were used, and in the Cambridge area, where the labour shortage was most acute, mechanical thinners were employed.

The introduction of a chemical Herbicide was a major breakthrough. In the Fens, the labour shortage was not so serious, and this was just as well, because these new developments did not prove very successful on the fen soils.

In fact, the chemical Herbicide was completely inactivated by the high organic content in the light fen.

The outlook now is very much brighter. For this coming season, there will be two or three chemicals on the market that should provide satisfactory weed control on the fen soils, and with genetic monogerm seed available, the fen farmer will undoubtedly continue to grow increasing tonnage per acre.

Although the fen soil is easy working and light, it is because of these factors it has one major drawback. It will blow in the spring if the winds are high. This can cause great damage, cutting off or smothering the young beet seedlings. This is always the threat in the spring.

A disease that can cause havoc —a sugar beet heavily attacked by root-knot eelworm.

On the left, a photograph of a diseased sugar beet root, and caption.

Caption reads: A disease that can cause havoc, --a sugar beet heavily attacked by root-knot eelworm.

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Problem of Vanishing Peats.

By Douglas Oliver.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 24th, 1967.

Fenland's most-extraordinary change came when the area was drained, for that established its farming prosperity. Once large acreages became cultivable, the reign of the Fen soils began. It led to a highly-characteristic kind of farming, among the richest in the country, as the Fen people profited out of the rich organic content of the black peats.

Now the experts are having to think out the farming implications of a new reign, –the skirt soils that result from a mixture of peats and the subsoils.

The county agricultural adviser, Mr G J Clarke, explained how the Fen peats are beginning to vanish. These peat soils have shrunk over the years, and the critical stage is reached when they form less than a two-feet layer over the different soil underneath.

The shallow depth means that cultivation processes normal in farming are likely to drag up the underlying soil and mix it with the peat. The result is skirt soil.

Maps can be drawn to show how much soils in Cambridgeshire and surrounding Fen land are likely to change over the next few years. And if the soil alters, so does the kind of farming. That, in turn, affects the social pattern.

This can be shown in one of the Fenland's most important crops, potatoes. It is a crop which has usually promised a high return per acreage, and has therefore been particularly suited to the small Fen farms who must make the maximum profit out of their acreage to get a decent living.

Fortunately, the richly organic peat soils are good for growing potatoes.

The likelihood is that potatoes will, to some extent, decline even more in Fenland over the next few years. This is, in fact, already happening; and the trend has been accelerated by the build-up in the Fens of a yield crippling pest: --potato root eelworm.

The main answer to eelworm at the moment is to increase the time between crops on a given field, which naturally involves fewer potatoes being grown.

If they are not growing so many potatoes, Fen farmers have to find an alternative which will give them something like the same high returns.

In most cases the alternative chosen is sugar beet, although a limiting factor here is that the British Sugar Corporation allocate set quotas for growing this crop.

Mr. Clarke says the figure shows this trend in action. "The Sugar Beet Corporation in the Fens have increased the crop enormously, –and this is a crop that the Fenman grows extremely well."

## Eelworm story.

Comparing 1954 and 1965 in the Isle of Ely, the sugar beet acreage has gone up from 22,500 to 31,500. In 1966, the combined county of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely totalled 48,700 acres.

The combined county's acreage of potatoes was about 41,000 in 1965, but last year dropped to 39,900, being overtaken by sugar beet.

"This is partly an eel worm story, and it still leaves Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely as the biggest potato producer in the eastern region," Mr Clarke emphasised.

But he added, "This is a trend which could easily continue, and could mean a drop down the table for the county on potatoes."

Mr Clarke said it was impossible to generalise on whether the change from peat was a good or a bad thing. "Many farmers will say, 'The quicker the peat goes the better, but others will say, 'It is necessary for me to retain as much of the peat as I possibly can."

Fairly stiff.

If a farmer has a substantial acreage, and is pleased to contemplate a fairly high proportion of cereals, he is not going to mind very much how quickly the peat goes.

“But those farmers who are particularly keen on their potato crops, –especially where the underlying soils are fairly stiff, –are going to be concerned with maintaining a fairly high organic level in the soil.”

This makes working the soil much easier. It also helps the production of crops, giving a high return for a small acreage, such as potatoes.

“Some experts quote 15 percent organic matter on heavy clay soils as being desirable for potato crops, " said Mr Clarke.

The irony of the situation is that, whereas smaller men will be hit hardest by the loss of their peat, the bigger farmers are more likely to be able to afford the mechanisation necessary for the soil-mixing techniques which may help to preserve it.

Concentration.

“So, the overall effect would be to consolidate the big man's position and accelerate his importance in Fenland farming, " Mr Clarke pointed out.

If loss of peat means yet greater concentration on cereals, this would only reinforce a pattern that has been emerging over the years in the agriculture of the eastern region.

Comparing 1965 with 1952, (in brackets), the eastern region’s cropping has shown the following pattern in acres: Wheat, 827,600, (606,581); barley, 1,166,700, (774,819); oats, 60,100, (251,294); potatoes, 183,000, (192,068); sugar beet, 289,000, (240,767); vegetables, 190,000 (157,746); leys, 323,200, (438,480); and permanent pasture, 679,500, (870,719).

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The Sugar-Sweet Smell of Success.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 24th, 1967.

The machines are now silent. The Thunder of lorries is no more. Muddy, puddle-strewn lanes have been cleared of the debris that inevitably falls from their loads. A near-record sugar beet harvest has ended, and the Ely factory that turns one of Fenlands basic crops into raw sugar, is recovering from one of the most successful campaigns for many years.

Sugar beet is likely to remain an important Fen crop, and if the region’s shrinkage is spreading concern among farmers, it is certainly not disturbing the Ely Beet Sugar Factory’s agriculturist, Mr D Bradford.

“I can't imagine that it will have any effect for the next 15 years, " he comments. “Looking further ahead at the next 30 or 40 years, conditions might become more difficult for, as the soil gets progressively heavier, sugar beet growing and treatment may be different.”

The total production of sugar beet has been slightly more than last year, with a yield of 17 tons per acre, the second highest on record, comparing with 18.9 in 1960.

The standard of the crop has been above normal, and Mr Bradford feels this is due to a lot of luck with frost and the willingness of growers to take the right steps to protect their crops. It has also been a healthy crop which, with one or two small exceptions, has been remarkably disease-free.

All this has helped to make the work at the beet sugar factory easier. The factory, one of 18 in the country dealing with home-grown sugar, handles the output of some 2150 farmers, on 32,000 acres, in Bedford, Cambridgeshire the Isle of Ely, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk and West Suffolk.

The plant has to run night and day, to see that production costs are kept down to a minimum and, of course, to ensure the beet harvest is dealt with as quickly as possible.

During the season, the factory employs about 340 people, with 66 working on each of the three shifts, plus 140-day workers and office staff.

The farmer's contact with the factory is usually through beet reception.

This is controlled by regulating the intake in 5 1/2 days, to the 30,000 tons of beet needed during the 168-hour week.

Each grower receives a permit for each load of beet delivered, and great pains are taken to see that these are issued to ensure a regular amount of beet leaves each farm weekly.

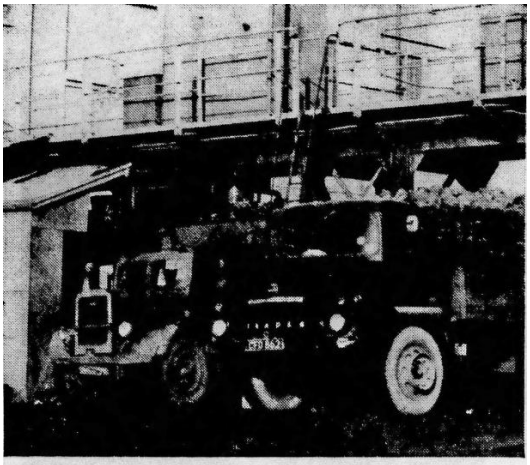
This is fixed according to the acreage and tonnage of beet grown, but it has to be kept under constant revision to maintain an even flow of about 600 loads daily.

In Britain, the average individual consumption of sugar is 116 lbs per person, per year, mostly in the manufactured foods bought in the shops.

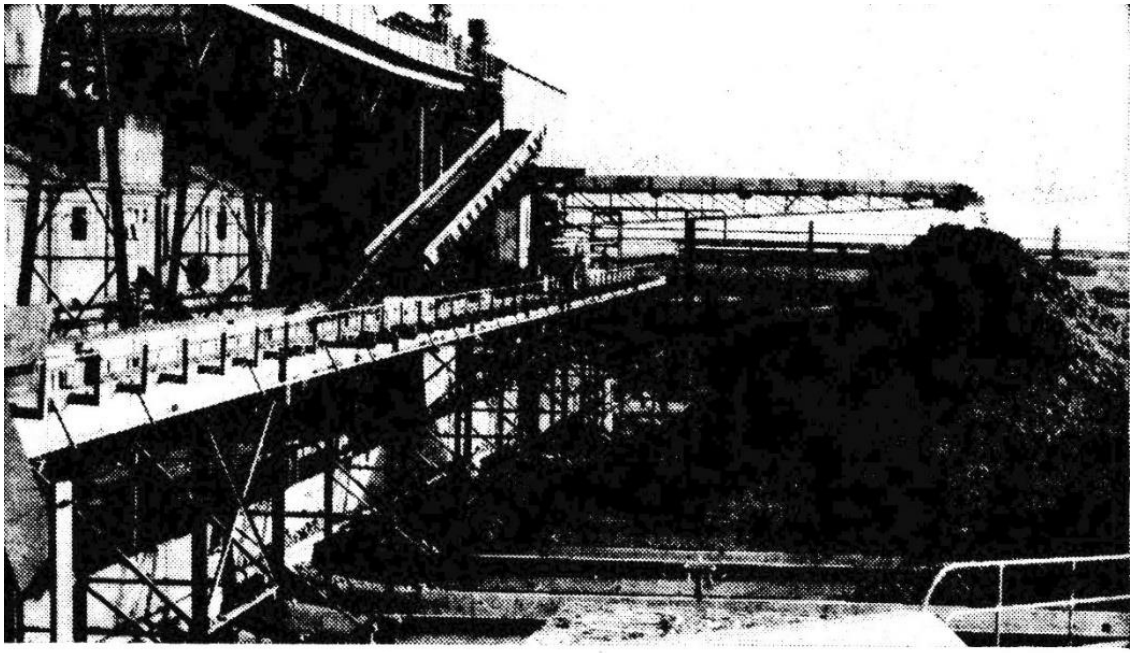
The British beet sugar industry supplies about 29 percent of the three million tonnes used in the country each year.

Britain is the fourth largest producer in Europe, behind Italy, West Germany and France.

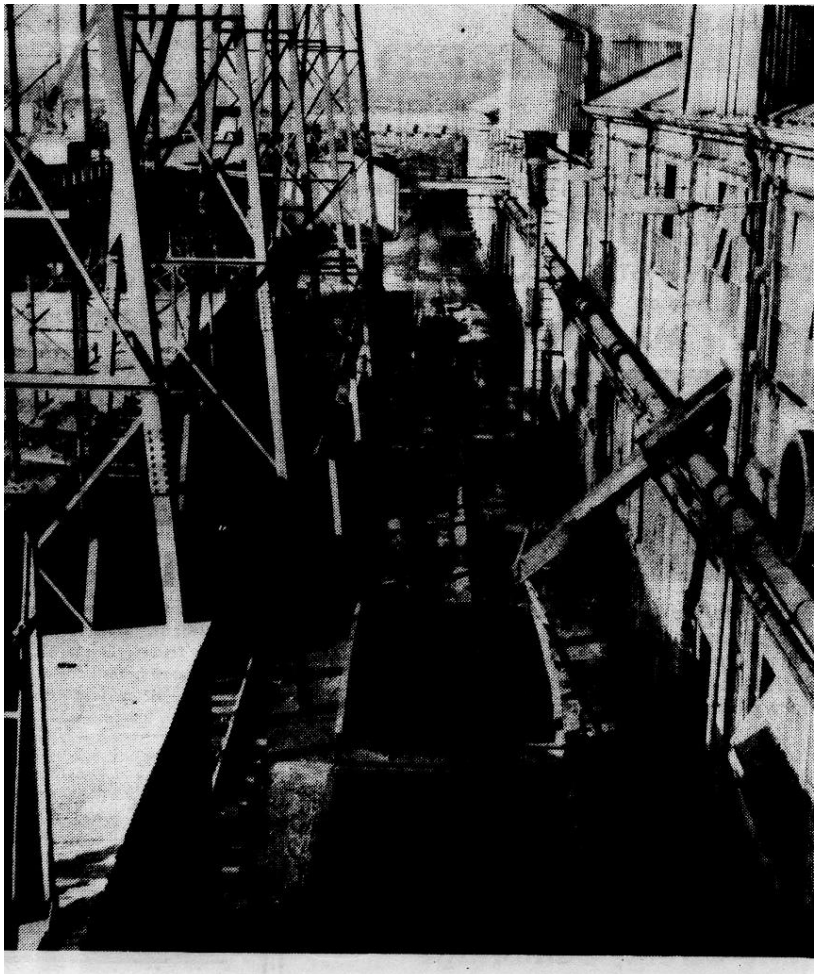
Photographs and captions from this issue of the newspaper are shown below. Bearing in mind they are printed and copied from an on-line source, they are not of the best quality, but reflect the various stages of sugar production.



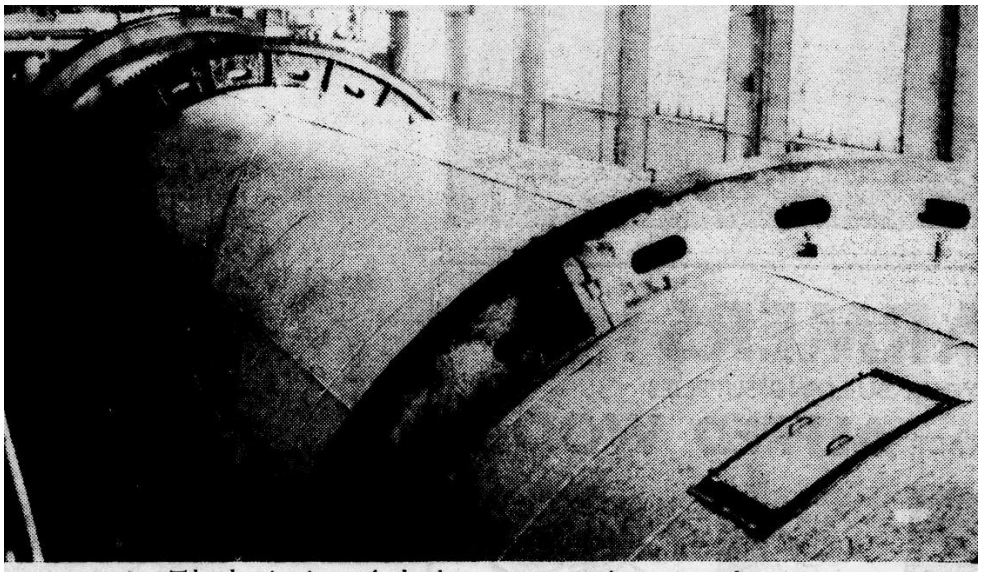
*Each day 550 to 650 lorry loads of beet pour into the Ely factory.*



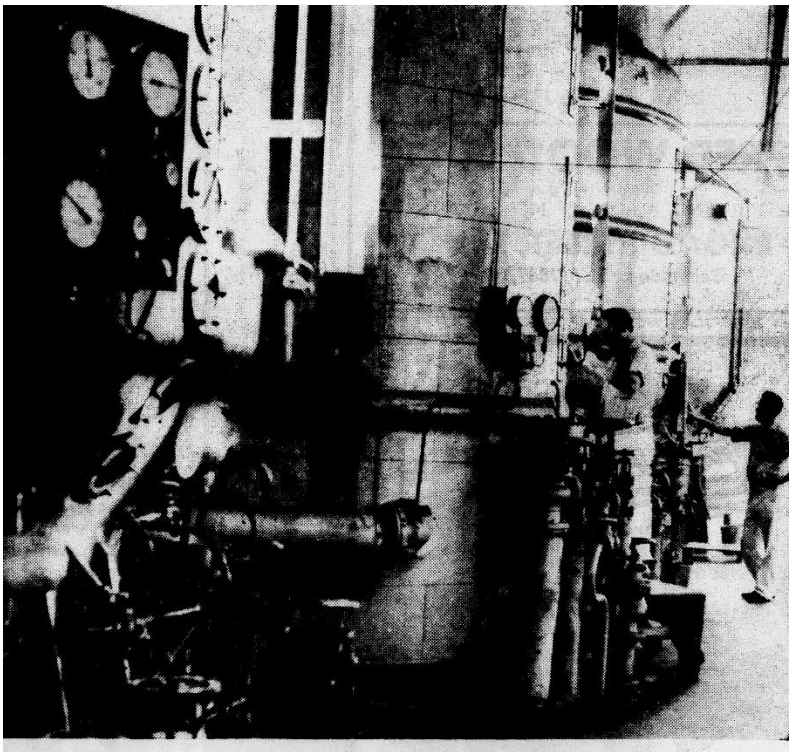
*The yield of beet averages between 400,000 and 550,000 tons yearly and the bulk of it passes through this recently modernised storage area.*



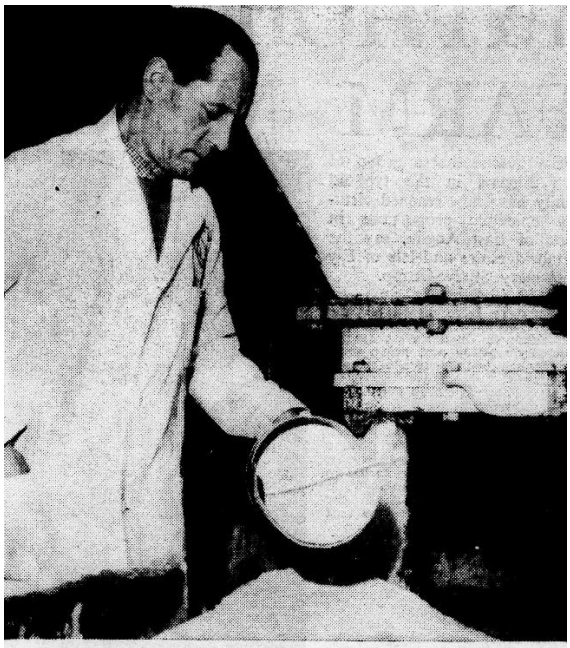
*The beet is one stage nearer processing when it passes from the storage yard into the factory.*



*The beginning of the long process of turning the raw product into something similar to what the housewife buys. The beet is untouched from the time it arrives until the sugar leaves the factory for refining elsewhere. One of the most interesting processes comes early on when cleaned and sliced beet passes through this continuous diffuser, once ranked as the world's biggest.*



*The raw juice passes on its way through these cylinders where the impurities are removed by the addition of lime and filtration. Boiling takes place and the sugar crystals are eventually removed by centrifugal force to be cooled and dried.*



*Raw sugar the almost finished product.*

*Destination refinery. The raw sugar is sent elsewhere for refining and the other beet products are either used for cattle food or molasses.*

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Sugar Beet and Dirt Tare Samples.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, March the 2nd, 1967.

Regulations in the sugar beet contract covering dirt tare samples taken at some factories with the mechanical “probe” technique are being considered by the National Farmers Union and the British Sugar Corporation.

This follows an accusation at an Isle of Ely National Farmers Union executive committee meeting, that probe samples could be unfair.

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Third Best Beet Crop.

The Sleaford Standard, Friday, April the 7th, 1967.

With an average yield of 15.1 tons per acre, a sugar content of 15.78 percent, and a tonnage of 6,495,000, Britain's 1966 to 1967 beet crop was the third best ever. Sugar content the previous season was 15.6 percent.

Estimated yield of white sugar was 847,000 tons, molasses 282,000 tons and dried beet pulp 547,000 tons. Here is the league table for factories in the area.

The newspaper clipping below, indicates the factories, the tonnage received, and the sugar content, for the years, 1965-6, and 1966-7, in league table format.

Bardney was top, followed by Brigg, Ely, Kings Lynn, Newark, Peterborough and Spalding.

# Third best beet crop

**With an average yield of 15.1 tons per acre, a sugar content of 15.78 per cent, and a tonnage of 6,495,000, Britain's 1966-7 beet crop was the third best ever. Sugar content the previous season was 15.6 per cent.**

**Estimated yield of white sugar was 847,000 tons, molasses 282,000 tons, and dried beet pulp 547,000 tons. Here is the league table for factories in the area.**

| Factory | Tonnage received | | Sugar content | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1966–7 | 1965–6 | 1966–7 | 1965–6 |
| Bardney | 347,826 | 376,594 | 15.94 | 15.50 |
| Brigg | 269,016 | 307,072 | 15.91 | 15.32 |
| Ely | 551,526 | 518,344 | 15.47 | 15.13 |
| King's Lynn | 530,776 | 512,366 | 15.63 | 15.51 |
| Newark | 206,424 | 243,956 | 16.12 | 15.64 |
| Peterborough | 642,773 | 692,696 | 15.46 | 15.38 |
| Spalding | 407,971 | 427,179 | 15.32 | 15.50 |

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Sugar Beet.

British Sugar Corporation Firmly in control.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, September the 15th, 1967.

Sugar beet growing in this country is controlled by the British Sugar Corporation under contracts made each year with farmers. The Corporation is confined to the acreage laid down by the Government and announced at the annual Price Review.

The Price Review also lays down the price, (which is related to the sugar content of the beet crop), that the Corporation has to pay to the grower.

The Annual Review White Paper this year, decreed that the maximum acreage for the 1967 crop, to which the guaranteed price will apply, should be 427,400 acres in England and Wales, and 15,000 in Scotland.

The guaranteed price, –that fixed by the Government each year, and based on a sugar content of beet of 16 percent, –was fixed at 133 shillings per ton, an increase of two shillings and 6 pence per ton, compared with last year.

Seed control.

The Corporation has full control of the sugar beet crop in this country, even insofar as the purchase of seed, which can only be obtained by growers through the Corporation.

Very rigid procedures are applied by the Corporation before it includes any new seed variety in its approved list, and through its officers, it maintains constant vigilance over the acreages under contract.

Sugar beet growers have the advantage of a statutory scheme for research and education, the cost of which is met by a levy imposed equally upon sugar beet growers and the British Sugar Corporation.

In addition, the Corporation maintains an agricultural organisation, the function of which is to pass on to growers as rapidly as possible, the results obtained under the research scheme.

The 1967 levy.

In March this year, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Fred Peart, made the Sugar Beet (Research and Education) Order 1967, approving the programme of research and education for the year from April the 1st, 1967, and fixing the actual contribution for the year at threepence halfpenny, per net ton of beet, payable by both the growers and the British Sugar Corporation, the total cost of the programme is £166,000.

Close links.

Research is vital in view of the very many changes now taking place. In addition, growers and firms and organisations concerned with machinery, chemicals and so on, attach great value to the two demonstrations held each year in the Spring and Autumn.

Technical officers of the Corporation maintain the closest of links with the growers, and of course, the men who are known personally to the farmer are the fieldsman, who, in addition to their other duties, play a vital part in getting the beet to the factories at the height of the campaign. This lasts from September to January and, in some cases, goes on to the first week in February.

Good timing.

At this period, the factories are working night and day, coping with something like 54,000 tons per day. Good timing is essential, for it is most important to keep a regular flow of beet into the factory without creating bottlenecks.

Processing centres in beet areas.

Eighteen factories throughout the country deal with the sugar beet crop, which last year, amounted to some six and a half million tons.

These factories, conveniently placed in the beet growing areas, are Peterborough, Ely, Kings Lynn, Bury Saint Edmunds, Spalding, Ipswich, York, Selby, (Yorkshire), Newark, (Nottinghamshire), Nottingham, Allscott, (Shropshire), Kidderminster, (Worcestershire), Cantley, (Norfolk), Brigg, (Lincolnshire), Bardney, (Lincolnshire), Wissington, (Norfolk), Felsted, (Essex) and Cupar, (Scotland).

Tonnage dealt with at each factory varies, but some comparisons based on last year's figures are: Peterborough, 642,773 tons; Bury Saint Edmunds, 739,890 tons; Ely, 551,526 tons; Ipswich, 467,716 tons; Kings Lynn, 530,776 tons; Spalding, 407,971 tons; Wissington, 372,903 tons; and Bardney, 347,826 tons.

These are big tonnages, especially when it is realised that the sugar beet campaign lasts from September to January, making it imperative that, at the factories, there should be split second timing, so far as the various processes are concerned.

## Sugar, syrup.

The 18 factories last year produced from the total tonnage of beet, some 847,000 tons of white sugar. Molasses (syrup) production was 282,000 tons, and dried beet pulp totalled 282,000 tons.

Molasses, as can be seen, form a significant part of the production of the factories, and no less important is the sugar beet pulp used for feeding livestock. Then there is the “waste” lime, left after the various processes. This gives the farmer a cheap but efficient fertiliser.

In recent years, a programme of improvements at factories, by way of increased capacity, new machinery, up-to-date techniques and better storage facilities for the sugar has been carried out. By these means, the average daily capacity has increased by about 2,000 tons to 54,000 tons per day.

Additional silos for white sugar brought into use in 1965 and 1966, increased bulk storage to a total of 220,000 tons.

Great attention has been paid to the research side of the business, and much time has been spent on methods of providing sugar in the best way suited to the customer. And in spite of great competition, the demand for British Sugar Corporation domestic and catering packs, particularly caster, icing and cube sugar, continues to increase.

Great strides have also been made in the method of preparing and packing the molassed, sugar beet pulp. This is an important factor, for pulp can make a significant contribution to the winter feed resources on arable farms where a considerable head of livestock is kept.

## Beet: A Major Crop.

In less than half a century, sugar beet has become a major British farm crop, grown each year on about 430,000 acres of land on around 35,000 farms, mostly in eastern England.

Each acre produces about 15 tons of beet, making an annual yield throughout the country of some 6,500,000 tons a year.

We consume more sugar per head in the United Kingdom than anywhere else in the world, with an intake of about one hundredweight per person per year. More than half of this comes direct from the grocer. The rest is consumed indirectly in sweets, soft drinks and manufactured foods.

Beet harvesting starts in mid-September and lasts till about Christmas time. The big factories where the beet is processed, work day and night coping with the crop, until well into the New Year.

Loads are timed to give an even flow of beet into the factories.
At the factory, beet is washed, sliced and the sugar dissolved out in hot water. The sugar solution being then filtered to remove impurities.

Evaporating plant turns the liquid into a thick syrup, which goes on to be boiled until it becomes a mixture of sugar crystals and syrup. These are separated in centrifugal machines which retain the white sugar in a central wire mesh, and fling the syrup out through the mesh for further treatment.

The crystals pass onto granulators for the final process before packaging.

During the annual beet campaigns, British sugar factories deal with nearly 60,000 tons of beet a day. In a year, they produce a total of about 900,000 tons of white sugar.

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Seed: Monogerm Monopoly in Sight.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, September the 15th, 1967.

It may sound melodramatic, but the sugar beet industry is now passing through a real revolution related to the seed which produces the beet in the field.

Ever since the crop was grown in England, in the early 1920's, multigerm seed, either as natural or mechanically processed, has been used by the farmer.

In the past 20 years in Europe, plant breeders and scientists have been working with genetic monogerm sugar beet material, found by a Russian named Savitsky in America in the early 1940's.

Their work has recently culminated in three genetic monogerm varieties being added to the Recommended List, which will help retain the farmers interest in growing the beet crop.

The old fashioned multigerm seed will now disappear. Already, there are indications that in 1969 up to 70 percent of the British Sugar Corporation's acreage, will be sown with genetic monogerm seed.

At one time, processed multigerm occupied 84 percent of the acreage. The seed was rubbed to improve the monogermity. The monogermity of beet is a complex trait and, in the case, the only shoot appears from single fruit seedling, and thereby reduce the singling time in the field, and to make the shape more uniform, so that the precision drills could place it more accurately.

After 20 years.

The production of this seed has been a great assistance to the farmer, reducing his growth costs, but the limit of improvement had been reached. The breeder has, after 20 years of patient work, taken a further great step forward by introducing, through a programme of back-crossing and selection, the high sugar yield and root characteristics of the multigerm varieties into the genetic monogerm material received from America.

The original American material over here was quite unsuitable to our climate and environment conditions. The outcome of this work is the appearance of commercially recommended monogerm varieties, which can now be safely used by the farmer without loss of yield, and with savings in cost of production.

Precision drilling.

These new varieties will produce one plant from a seed unit, thereby eliminating the cost of singling, –provided that the seeds are accurately placed in the ground. In this respect, continued improvements to our precision drills are welcomed as facilitating better drilling.

A pelleting process, –enveloping single seed units with a material which quickly disintegrates in contact with moisture in the soil, –has proved to be a great help towards efficient spacing in

the row. A very large percentage of the new monogerm varieties will be presented to the farmer in this form.

The drills we have available, used intelligently, are able to place this type of seed at four-inch spacing which is the “safe” recommendation at the moment.

Combined with efficient spraying against weeds, the inherent single seed nature of the plant can save the farmer up to £10 per acre, and produce as large a crop, with little extra cost for seed.

There will be an increasing demand for this type of seed, and our old friend for many years, “multigerm seed”, will in time, become a thing of the past.

The production of the monogerm varieties is not without its problems, and new commercial techniques are evolving.

Most of the varieties are produced by crossing a tetraploid multi germ on to a monogerm male sterile, which can be accomplished either when grown as a mixed crop, or in strips in the field, but both methods produce less usable seed per acre.

Ripening of some varieties is later than their multigerm counterparts, and areas with more reliable harvesting weather than the UK have been sought in America, Canada, France, Italy and North Africa where improved seed quality can be obtained. (by D A J Randall).

## Adding to British Sugar Corporation Plant.

The policy of increasing factory capacity is not only continuing, but is essential to avoid unduly extended campaigns, said Sir Edmund Bacon, chairman of the British Sugar Corporation, Limited, at the corporation's annual meeting this year.

He went on to say that new plant for this purpose had been installed at Bardney, Cantley, Kings Lynn and Spalding, although a substantial part of their capital budget had to be earmarked for essential replacements.

The average daily capacity increased by about 2,000 tons of beet to 54,000 tons per day. Sir Edmund said that this year, they were intending to increase the capacity at Brigg, and to expand still further at Bardney.

Two additional sugar silos, complete with plant for bulk delivery, had been used for the first time at Spalding, and additional silos at Bardney and Felsted had been in use for the 1966 campaign. These increased their bulk storage capacity to 220,000 tons.

## Energy Restorer.

It is a basic fact of life that the more energy you use, the greater the need to replace it.

Nothing acts quite so quickly as sugar in replacing energy, since it reaches our digestive juices and undergoes a series of chemical reactions which very rapidly produce the energy which many of us require.

Sportsmen particularly can make use of this rapid energy giver. A sugar lump sucked in the middle of an energetic game will allow a sportsman to carry on much longer than if he did not take it.

It is obvious too, that a busy housewife who stops, sits back and takes a cup of coffee with one or two spoonsful of sugar can restore her energy in this way.

It has also a particular importance for old people, who often are not sustaining themselves by an adequate diet.

## They Push Sugar.

In 1964, a new organisation, the British Sugar Bureau, was formed by British Refiners, Westburn Sugar Refineries, the Manbre and Garton Group, the Tate and Lyle Group, and the British Sugar Corporation.

The objects of the Bureau are to bring to the attention of the general public the qualities of refined sugar, and to encourage its consumption.

The official statement announcing the setting up of the Bureau, stated that it had been felt for some time that more information should be available to the general public about this product, which forms so large a part of the national diet.

It went on to say that the Bureau would concern itself with making available all possible information regarding the product to the public at large.

Since its formation, the Bureau has been fulfilling this role. A film has been made explaining how the body converts sugar to energy, and booklets and wall charts are among the educational materials prepared.

## Crystal, Cubes or Gran?

Most people automatically reach for the sugar bowl without giving a second thought to the many types of sugar available to them for domestic use.

Each type of sugar has its particular advantages, some of which are not widely known. For example, sugar crystals act as tiny knives, which cut up the white of an egg during mixing and beating. Or that the texture of a cake depends largely upon the size of the sugar crystals.

Ordinary granulated sugar is for everyday use. Although it is cheap, it is still as sweet and pure as the finest methods in the world can make it, and is 99.956 percent pure sucrose.

Finest granulated sugar has a bright sparkle and its crystals are smaller and more regular in size than ordinary granulated.

Caster sugar dissolves quickly, which makes it popular for use with fruit and cereals at the table. It is a useful sugar for desserts and, because of its finer texture, is more easily absorbed for baking. Many regard it as an ideal all-purpose, high-quality sugar.

Icing sugar, apart from its use in icing cakes and making meringues, has several not-so-obvious uses such as in “fruit fools" where sweetness is required and a smoother sugar is necessary.

Coffee crystals are large and were originally produced for coffee connoisseurs who like the first few sips of their coffee to be bitter. The crystals dissolve slowly, and so the coffee would gradually sweeten.

Cube sugar succeeded the old-fashioned loaf sugar, which was produced in the shape of conical loaves. The loaves were then broken into pieces for easy use.

Now, the pure, regular and sparkling cubes of today are universally popular for all hot drinks, and are more convenient by reason of the fact that the exact quantity of sugar wanted can be measured into each cup.

Cube sugar varies in size to suit individual taste, –from the coarse, more heavy sugar, to the finer, lighter cubes.

Preserving crystals are smaller than coffee crystals, but, of course, larger than granulated and are used for preserving fruits, jams and pickles.

When in the preserving pan, the crystals do not settle in a dense layer on the bottom of the pan and, therefore, need less stirring to prevent burning.

Refined, (soft) brown sugar's, range in colour from golden to dark brown. They are popular for use with cereals and coffee, and in making fruit cakes and puddings. The darker the colour of the sugar, the stronger the flavour.

This sugar must be distinguished from the brown crystal sugar popularly known as “Demerara”. The latter is really raw sugar, from which only very few of the impurities have been removed. Refined, (soft) brown sugar, will do what Demerara does, and is of course, free from dirt.

Todd Cleaner/Loaders
soon pay for themselves with faster loading, reduced dirt tare, lower haulage costs.
* One man can load up to 1½ tons per minute
* Hopper accessible from three sides for easy loading by free-end loader or grab.
* Stable tripod base with large clearance for soil build-up.
* Choice of 4 models with petrol or diesel engine.
* Prices from £220
Ask your dealer for full details.
The yellow machine that handles with care
ROOT HARVESTERS LIMITED
FENGATE, PETERBOROUGH. Tel: 68336 & 69401

An advertisement on the left of a Todd Cleaner / Loader, with the claim that they “soon pay for themselves with faster loading, reduced dirt tare, and lower haulage costs.”

The yellow machine that handles with care.

Manufactured by Root Harvesters Limited, Fengate, Peterborough.

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## So-Smooth Sugar Beet Harvest.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, January the 5th, 1968.

The sugar beet harvest looks like being one of the smoothest on record, according to Mr Desmond Bradford, agriculturist at the Ely Beet sugar factory. With only about 20 percent of the mid-Anglia crop still to be treated at Ely, the harvest, while not falling into the record category, promises to be well above average standard.

Indeed, the last three have been so good, that Mr Bradford has a sneaking feeling that Mother Nature may have some nasty trump card up her sleeve for the next campaign.

Meanwhile, everything is going according to plan, –a key factor contributing towards the Ely factory completing the 18-week campaign slightly earlier than usual, at the end of January.

But it is not the only one. Modern machines are speeding up the whole harvesting operation. The weather has been mild enough for farmers to reach their goal of getting the bulk of the work out of the way before the severe December frosts, and improvements in the plant at Ely, Peterborough and Cantley, are making processing that much quicker.

Mr Bradford reckons that the final yield at Ely will be something between sixteen and a quarter and sixteen and a half tons per acre, a little down on last year. Sugar content is in the same position at 15.2 percent.

Very little of the crop is still in the ground, and the farmers cooperated so well with the factory over the Christmas holiday, that the daily throughput was maintained at between 4,200, and 4,300 tons for slicing a day.

### Storage Clamp Down.

The farmer who takes little or no precautions when storing sugar beet may be heading for trouble. Often there is such a rush to get all the beet up early, that farmers pay scant attention to the importance of ensuring that it is properly stored. Yet, poor storage arrangements can lead to loss of sugar content, and any farmers worth their salt, will want to avoid this hazard.

So does Mr D Bradford, the agriculturist at Ely sugar factory. He says recent trials have shown that by measuring temperatures inside a clamp, it is possible to discover whether or not conditions in the clamp are favourable for minimising sugar loss.

Mr Bradford, writing in the latest edition of the British Sugar Review, considers that beet keeps well if clamp temperatures can be maintained just above freezing point, but difficulties may arise where the temperature remains in the region of 10°C for any length of time.

Ventilation is particularly important, and the construction of the clamp is consequently worthy of careful consideration. Beets, he says, keep well in a ridge-type clamp, but with a large square clamp, care has to be taken to prevent it heating up too much. Badly-topped beet are undesirable, and so is excessive.

Mr Bradford also thinks it desirable to deliver beets in the sequence in which they were delivered to the factory. When frost warnings are imminent, there should be material available nearby to give coverage.

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## Ely Sugar Beet Campaign Ends.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, February the 2nd, 1968.

Another campaign at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory finishes this weekend, and by then, the factory will have dealt with nearly half a million tons.

The campaign, the 43rd since the factory was opened in 1925, has gone on round the clock since it started on September the 25th.

A spokesman said: “The sugar content is about average.”

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## One Type of Sugar Beet Seed for All?

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, March the 26th, 1968.

Monogerm sugar beet seed is here to stay, and Mr B K Morrish, agriculturist at Spalding beet sugar factory, considers that in five years’ time no other seed will be in use.

Speaking at a meeting at the factory, Mr Morrish also thinks that monogerm seed will be bought singly, and not by the pound, as it is at present.

The use of monogerm seed in the Spalding factory area had lagged behind, but he thought growers had been right in this respect, because they had not been faced with the labour difficulties experienced in other areas.

Last year, growers in this district had used 5 percent monogerm seed, compared with a national average of about 10 percent.

This year, the national average would be about 20 percent, and their figure; between 12, and 13, percent.

### Easy to see.

It was easy to see, he said, that by 1970, at the present rate, all seed used would be monogerm.

Mr Morrish revealed that this year, this type of seed was being produced at the Peterborough factory for their own and the Ely factory areas.

This, he considered, would help local growers, for it would mean they would get their germination counts much quicker. In the past, the Spalding factory had been criticised over the time it took for germination counts to be made.

Mr Morrish also pointed out, that while monogerm seed was tolerant of early sowing, growers would be best advised not to sow too early.

In any case, he said, the soil temperature at present was much lower than it had been this time last year.

Advantage.

Doctor Andrew Dunning, of Broom's Barn Experimental Station, said the advantage of monogerm seed, was that seed producers could provide seed which would give them reasonable vigour in the early stages of growth.

One of their biggest problems was to get the crop established, he said, and usually attacks by pests and diseases were tied up with poor conditions in the field.

With the use of wider spacings and herbicides, it means there would be less plants for the pests to feed on, but the pests could do a lot more damage as a result, he said.

They were aiming at protecting the crop in the early stages, and turning their attention to the smaller creatures in the soil which "nibbled" at the crop.

Herbicides.

Mr W Bray, of the Norfolk Agricultural Station, said that new herbicides were a great advantage in the control of weeds post emergence, but he did not want them to think they were the answer to all their problems.

Mr Bray said that until they got a better system, he thought they should rely upon their pre-emergence materials.

With the new materials available, Mr Bray said they could now look at the rates of application of pre-emergence materials, and they might well be able to reduce the levels, he added.

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Sugar beet: a bright picture.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, August the 30th, 1968.

Prospects are for an about average season in the flat, mid-Anglian sugar beet fields, according to the agriculturist at the Ely Beet Sugar factory, Mr Desmond Bradford.

After the alarming fears expressed about the cereals harvest, this news is very welcome.

Some areas of the Fens may produce disappointing results because of waterlogging and heavy top growth, but Mr Bradford said that throughout the region the picture was bright.

Healthy.

"In the Fens there will be some troubles, but the crop generally is fairly healthy and free from virus. The potential is greater, but so much depends on the way things develop," he said.

The Ely factory have been taking samples since early July, and root weights are fractionally below last year, but top weight is excessive and sugar content good.

There seems to be no end to the upward trend in yields.

While figures in recent years fluctuate, the average for the past five years is around sixteen and a half tons, and Mr Bradford is expecting something around this figure again.

Soared.

Last year the yield was 16.63 tons and the year before it soared to 17.26 tons.

“I think it could be between these two figures, but there is a likelihood that the sugar content will be slightly up, " he said.

Another good feature of this year's crop, is that bolters, (seeded beet), are not exceptional.

People planted at the right time, and the Fen blows did not cause as much damage as first seemed evident.

The proportion of monogerm has leapt from 10 percent to 25 percent. These strains, which grow a single plant instead of a cluster, have been developed with the idea of reducing singling problems.

Caught on.

“They now seem to have caught on, and growers are growing a bigger proportion, " said Mr Bradford.

The overall picture, then, is rosier than at one time seemed possible. The heavy rains have not proved the setback at first feared.

It is hardly likely, however, that the boom year of 1960, when there was an average of 18.9 tons to the acre, will be exceeded.

Nevertheless, it would seem that in contrast to some other crops, sugar beet is maintaining a steady pace of increasing yields.

One would think that there must be a limit to this development, but so far it does not appear to be in sight.

Put back?

Originally, it had been planned to open the Ely factory on September the 18th, but the delay in the cereals harvest means that this will now probably be put back to September the 23rd.

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Heavy Sugar Crop, But Content Down?

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, October the 4th, 1968.

Despite fears that bad weather would have delayed the start of the sugar beet harvest, the Ely Sugar Factory has started its campaign as usual, and the general manager, Mr Desmond Bradford, has forecast an above average crop.

Mr Bradford said: “The crop prospects are not as optimistic as they were before this recent heavy rain, but we are still expecting to get sixteen and a half tons of beet per acre, which is above average.”

He said that from field samples taken, it appeared that the sugar content would, however, be slightly below average, although the samples had a big potential because of the large amount of top growth, and the content could improve if there were dry conditions.

If all goes well, Mr Bradford said he hoped to keep up an average of 4,000 tons a day until the campaign ended, probably in January.

He added: “We had fears that the bad weather conditions would delay the start of the campaign, but we are starting at about our usual time after all.

I don't think we could expect a record yield. But certainly, it will be above average.”

43 years at factory.

Mr. Larwood is presented with his certificate for 40 years' service with the Ely Beet Sugar factory.

A man who helped to build the Ely Beet Sugar Factory and has worked there as a maintenance fitter ever since it was opened in 1925, retired on Monday.

He is Mr Frederick Larwood, of 84, Cambridge Road, Ely.

Now 65, he was one of two employees who were presented with cheques by the factory general manager, Mr D Bradford.

The second man was Mr Edward Creek, of Newnham Street, Ely, who has also reached retiring age. He has been a truck driver for 14 years, and before that, did campaign seasonal work at the factory for 15 years. The photograph below is of Mr Bradford presenting Mr Larwood with his 40 years’ service certificate.

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Good Run for Sugar Factory.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday, January the 3rd, 1969.

The Ely beet sugar factory, now nearing the end of its 44th campaign, is having one of its best runs since it was opened in 1925, said the general manager, Mr D Bradford, on Monday.

So far, more than 400,000 tons of beet have been dealt with. By the time the campaign closes at the end of January, more than half a million tons will have been sliced and processed.

Mr Bradford said the recent snow and frosts had caused a little difficulty in road conditions and crop loading, but there have been no intake problems.

Farmers and hauliers had had some problem in getting beet loaded and out of the gateways, but he added: “They have coped very well, and are keeping us supplied.”

He said there had been a little concern about some beet still not harvested, but he said: “Fortunately we have only about 4 percent of the crop left in the land. The rest is in clamps, and well covered.”

There had been no processing difficulties during the campaign, in which the slicing capacity had been 300 to 400 tons a day more than ever before.

Sugar content was not as high as in 1967. The average had remained fairly constant at just under 15 percent, but in the last few days had dropped slightly.

“All in all, the campaign is going quite smoothly,” commented Mr Bradford.

***

No Cause for Alarm at the Sugar Beet ‘Disaster’.

The Cambridge Daily News, Thursday, January the 30th, 1969.

Despite what some despondent farmers would have us believe, the sugar beet harvest has not been as dismal as all that.

The trouble is, that things have been so good in the last four years, that any slight decline in sugar content and yield is interpreted as a major disaster.

The area served by the Ely beet sugar factory has, it is true, been more unlucky than most.

The ground has been saturated for weeks on end, so that there are still around 6,000 acres of beet in the Fens, and round about which, remain unharvested.

Only the start.

What has been brought in, has been costly to lift, in the wettest season for many years.

Mr Desmond Bradford, the chief agricultural officer at Ely, says this has only happened once before, –in 1962.

This alone is an indication of the difficulties farmers have been up against.

And from what I hear, this is only the start of their troubles.

I have never seen so many weedy fields as I did going round the countryside at the weekend.

Twitch is clearly going to be a snag this year unless there is still some cold weather round the corner.

But back to sugar beet. Over the country as a whole, it is the second-best season on record for yields.

No significance.

Ely has not fared as well as the other British Sugar Corporation factories, but the difference on the four-year average is so marginal, as to make it impossible to read anything of significance into it.

The yield, --15.9 tons, --falls just below the four-year average for the factory, which last year recorded 16.6 tons, with 17.2 tons the year before that, and 16.1 tons in 1965.

Sugar content was similarly down, but not as low as generally forecast.

“It was the heavy rains last July which really caused the set back, " said Mr Bradford. “But it would be wrong to deduce from this that sugar beet prospects for the future look like going down again.”

Other factories.

“At the moment, the prospects are that, on average, yields will tend to increase.”

Although the Ely factory has now closed, factories at Bury Saint Edmunds, Kings Lynn, Felsted and Cantley, are still open to take crops which it has not been possible to harvest yet.

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Tests on Sowing Sugar Beet Seed.

The Cambridge Daily News, Thursday, February the 6th, 1969.

Trials carried out by the British Sugar Corporation, have shown that the best method of sowing sugar beet seed is by using a normal covering with a flat roller.

The chief agricultural officer for the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Mr Desmond Bradford, told a meeting in Cambridge this week that six processes had been tried.

“We found that the best way is to plant seed about three-quarters of an inch to 1 inch deep, using a normal covering with a flat roller, " he commented.

“The worst way of doing it is to use not a light roller, but a light rake in tow.”

Mr. Bradford also referred to some experiments with four different kinds of pelleting material.

“We found that the present technique is the best, " he declared. “It is very clean, is the right size, is easily absorbed into the soil, and keeps well.”

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British Sugar Corporation Pioneer’s Retirement.

Presentation to Spalding factory manager.

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, March the 25th, 1969.

Mr I L Slatopolsky, “one of the pioneers of the sugar industry in this country,” retired from the post of general manager of Spalding Sugar Factory last week.

Mr B T Bonner, the new general manager, presented him with a candelabra on behalf of the staff and employees of the factory on Tuesday.

Mr Bonner described Mr Slatopolsky as one of the pioneers of the industry in this country.

“His experience and sterling qualities have largely contributed to the success of the Spalding factory, which has developed from a raw sugar factory handling 2,800 tons of beet a day, to a modern white sugar factory with a throughput of nearly 5,000 tons a day.”

Mr Slatopolsky was born in Glasgow and gained a Bachelor of Science in applied chemistry at Glasgow University.

He joined the Ipswich factory of the British Sugar Corporation and then worked at Nottingham and Cupar before settling at Peterborough as works chemist and then as assistant works manager.

After 20 years in Peterborough, he moved to Ely as works manager, and then to Spalding as general manager in 1961.

Enjoyed.

He said on Tuesday that he had thoroughly enjoyed his stay at the Spalding factory, and spoke of the excellent co-operation between the departments.

“There is a spirit of goodwill and tolerance which I have found very stimulating,” he said.

Mr Slatopolsky is married and has one son and one grandson. He has several hobbies, one of them being the study of the supernormal. He became a member of the society for Psychical Research many years ago.

He has always been interested in music. At Peterborough he formed the Nene Valley Singers, and at Ely, he formed the Ely Opera Group. He and his wife are both members of the South Holland Singers.

He is a keen Rotarian and is to become president of the Spalding club in June.

Mr and Mrs Slatopolsky will continue to live at Hillside, Holbeach Hurn.

Adviser.

Mr Slatopolsky told members of the works advisory council, he would not be completely severing his connections with the British Sugar Corporation, as he is to act as a part-time adviser to a firm of management consultants engaged on an investigation into the employee wage structure.

The new general manager, Mr Bernard T Bonner, was born in Grantham and graduated in special chemistry at Nottingham University.

He worked for the British Sugar Corporation in Kidderminster, Peterborough and then Nottingham before moving to Spalding last year. Mr Bonner, who is 47, is a bachelor. He devotes his spare time to golf, fishing and wine-making.

Engineer.

Also retiring this week is Mr Norman Finney, works electrical engineer. Mr Slatopolsky presented him with a radio set on behalf of the staff and employees on Tuesday.

Mr Finney comes from Stourbridge, and worked for the Shropshire Sugar Beet Company before coming to Spalding in 1947. As works electrical engineer, he was soon involved in planning a large new electrical plant.

Mr Slatopolsky paid tribute on Tuesday to his skill in organising this new installation.

Mr Finney used to be a keen sportsman and captained the tennis section of the factory's sports club for 16 years.

New works manager will be Mr Derek Whitmore from Bury Saint Edmunds. He is married, and will live at 35, Halmer Gate, Spalding.

Also on the promotion list is Mr J N Smith, of Avebury Gardens, Spalding, at present assistant works manager, who is to become plant manager.

Photograph and caption below:

Caption reads: --At the British Sugar Corporation presentation ceremony on Tuesday, from the left; Mr D R Whitmore, the new works electrical engineer; Mr N Finney, the retiring works electrical engineer; Mr B T Bonner, the new general manager; Mr Slatopolsky, retiring general manager; and Mr J N Smith, who is to become plant manager.

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Sugar Beet, an East Midland Allied Press Feature.

Spring 1969.

Beet 'salvage plan' cheats the weather.

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, March the 25th, 1969.

A “salvage operation”, based on the Kings Lynn factory, which remained open for an extended period, in an attempt to amass the maximum tonnage under atrocious conditions, proved eminently successful.

Due to this move and the gargantuan efforts of growers and all the British Sugar Corporation factories to combat the weather conditions which threatened to keep large acreages of beet still in the ground, the campaign ended with over seven million tons of beet having been handled.

The only other time when the seven-million-ton mark has been exceeded, was in 1960-61, and though predictions were that the 1968 crop would create a record, the continuous bad weather made it very doubtful whether, in fact, the beet crop could be got out of the ground and to the factories. In most of the factories, dirt tare reached a higher figure than last year, something that was to be expected having regard to the soggy state of the ground.

Vital days.

Though it is by no means clear just what acreage of beet has been unharvested, the fact remains that it is very much less than was anticipated when the campaign opened.

At the Kings Lynn factory, some 40,000 tons from “outside areas" were dealt with during those vital extra days of operation, and it was this that tipped the scale and made it, statistically at least, a much brighter picture for the British Sugar Corporation.

And despite all the difficulties encountered, slicing records were broken at certain factories. There was quick handling of beet tonnages, which because of the erratic weather, fluctuated a great deal, creating periods of large tonnages being received somewhat spasmodically.

It is a tribute to the factories and to the growers, that many difficulties were overcome. For some farmers, the task seemed well-nigh impossible, but through cooperation and understanding between grower and factory, it was possible in most cases to maintain a reasonably steady flow of beet into the factories.

Photograph and caption below:
Caption reads: --A line of lorries loaded with sugar beet, standing for more than a mile from the Kings Lynn factory during the “extended period” of operation, when beet from outside areas was brought in.

## Low sugar percentage from big crop.

As was to be expected after a very wet season, sugar content suffered, and in no factory was 16 percent recorded. Total tonnage for all factories passed the 7-million-ton mark, only the second time this figure has been reached.

At Bury Saint Edmunds, where the total tonnage was 721,733, compared with 737,159 for 1967-68, the average sugar content was 15.57, as against 15.78 the previous year.

The Ely factory dealt with a greater tonnage this year than in 1967-68, – 524,651, as against 506,703. Sugar content, however, dropped from 15.41 in 1967-68, to 14.90.

Felstead, with a total of 364,092 tons, was well up on the previous year's figures of 288,663, but showed a decrease in sugar content from 15.67 to 15.34.

Kings Lynn, dealing as it did with the extra tonnage from outside areas, finished the campaign with a total of 569,473 tons, compared with 492,514 of the previous year. Sugar content was 15.27 as against the figure of 15.90.

Total tonnage at Newark showed a decrease over the previous year from 223,830 to 204,793. Average sugar content also showed a drop from 15.89 to 15.33.

Peterborough handled a total of 528,699 tons as compared with the 1967-68 total of 631,756 tons. Sugar content was down, – 14.87 as against 15.71 of the previous year.

Spalding, with a tonnage of 480,149, ended this year's campaign with a total of 497,609 tons. Sugar content of 15 percent was below the 1967-68 figure of 15.73.

Wissington tonnage was 387,856 compared with 375,789 of the previous year, but sugar content was lower, --15.09 as against 15.46.

## A 'break' with cash rewards.

Sugar beet is grown as a cash crop in the root, (or fallow) break in the rotation on about 28,000 British farms each year. It has the great advantage for the farmer that; –through its crown and leaves and the pulp, –it provides the stock food normally produced by feeding roots.

The seed is sown in March-April, and harvesting commences in mid-September. The manufacturing season last from September, to as far ahead as February when necessary.

## Spring show in Lincolnshire.

A man who still believes in handwork for all thinning and singling, will be host to the Spring Sugar Beet Demonstration being staged in May.

He is Mr G R Ward, of Bleak House, Caythorpe Heath, Lincolnshire, who farms a total of 1,700 acres.

The two demonstrations, held each year In Spring and Autumn, –have steadily grown in major events in the agricultural calendar, and this is understandable when one studies the comprehensive nature of the demonstration, forming between them a very complete picture of the seedbed preparation, sowing and harvesting of beet.

Supported by manufacturers, the demonstrations offer the opportunity of seeing the latest equipment in action.

Organised efficiently, and with an understanding of the practical problems facing growers, the demonstrations have earned a high reputation.

This is as it should be, having regard to the enormous amount of work put into the events over a long period of time.

Grouping has many benefits.

More and more interest is being taken in grouping of sugar beet production, and the interest shown has come from farmers with varying acreages and conditions.

Grouping among sugar beet growers falls into line with the general trend in other facets of agriculture for cooperation, and the benefits that accrue from such a development are an incentive.

The setting up of the Central Council for Agricultural and Horticultural Cooperation has given the lead to those who might have been reticent to embark on any such scheme.

The vital ingredient of the scheme for cooperation is to know the full facts, before entering into an arrangement.

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News from Fordham.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, June the 26th, 1969.

Death occurred suddenly after his admittance to Newmarket General Hospital on June the 13th, of Mr Sidney Ellington. Mr Ellington had been ill for some time. He was 63 years and leaves a widow and two sons. He had been employed at the Ely Sugar Beet factory for 40 years.

The funeral took place at Saint Peter's Church, Fordham, on Thursday. Immediate mourners were: Mrs S Ellington, (widow), --Mr. J Ellington, (son), --Mr and Mrs R Ellington), son and daughter-in-law), --Mrs P Parr, sister-in-law), --Mr and Mrs F Parr; Mr and Mrs C Parr; Mr R Parr; Mr and Mrs C Parr; Mr and Mrs R Parr; (nephews and nieces);

Members of staff of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory and many other friends were present. Many flowers were received.

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Interesting Findings in the Work at Experimental Stations.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, September the 4th, 1969.

Work on sugar beet at various Experimental Husbandry Farms, viewed by thousands of farmers during the ‘summer’ season of Open Days, has thrown up many interesting findings.

One of the important messages put over at the Norfolk Agricultural Station, was the need to produce beet of a uniform size, which harvesters and loaders could treat all in the same manner.

This, it was said, could be done only by regular spacing of the plants in the row.

## Losses.

It was found that big sugar beets could cause significant yield losses during harvesting, simply by crowding out the smaller beet on their way from field to factory.

Now in its second year at the Station, is a Spring mechanisation trial, in which hand and mechanical thinning, gapping and drilling to a stand, have all been employed.

The trial has shown, that in whatever way the seedbed preparation is carried out, the yield of washed beet is higher using hand lifting techniques, rather than mechanical.

## Drilling.

The introduction of better herbicides and monogerm seed, has made possible the technique of drilling to a stand, and it was pointed out, that it opened up the possibility of a crop not needing any labour or mechanical cultivations, from the time of drilling onwards.

What was needed to make this a reality were individual plants spaced along the row as required, and herbicides to control weeds during the growing season. Further work was needed, but the idea of minimal cultivations was no longer mere pie in the sky.

Over the last three years, work at both Sprowston and Morley has shown that there need be no loss of yield from crops grown in this way, and providing weed growth is controlled, there would seem to be nothing to prevent retention of a good surface mulch.

At the Terrington Experimental Husbandry Farm, Mr R H Jarvis, deputy director, demonstrated a trial where sugar beet drilled and chopped out in the usual way, was being compared with beet drilled to a stand at five inches spacing and treated with different herbicides.

In spite of the difficulties in seedbed preparation, the field germination of the pelleted monogerm seed had been high, and final plant population on plots drilled at five inches spacing were 40 to 45,000 per acre, compared with the traditional 30,000 per acre.

## Taped seed.

Neither of the herbicides used had given entirely satisfactory weed control. Phenmedipham had very little effect on knotgrass, and in the case of pyrazon, the control of knotgrass could not be rated better than “fair”.

The use of taped seed is a technique that created a great deal of interest among the visitors to the Arthur Rickwood Experimental Husbandry Farm.

Used extensively in America by lettuce growers, taped seed; –seed enclosed in a plastic tape which breaks up rapidly in the soil, –has the advantage of allowing drilling to take place at greater speed, and with the simple drilling device used at this Experimental Husbandry Farm, it is possible to work at up to five miles per hour.

## Disappointing.

The results with sugar beet this year, however, have been rather disappointing, though the system had worked quite well with onions.

Work over the past three years has established the fact that it is feasible to drill to a stand on peaty fen soil.

There need be no fears about emergence on such soil, said the Experimental Husbandry Farm director, Mr Robert Wickens, who disclosed that this year field emergence was not far short of laboratory germination.

They also knew as a result of wide testing, that monogerm varieties compared favourably with multigerm seeds.

## Fen blows.

Better monogerm varieties were needed, said Mr Wickens, who asserted that there could be as much as a ton decrease in yield with monogerm, as compared with the best of the multigerms.

He also reiterated what has been said in so many other quarters, –the need for even better herbicides.

Some of the most important work being carried out at this station is the search for the answer to the ravages caused by “Fen blows”.

Short-term shelter for beet is one way that is being tried. This is afforded either by natural weed cover or by drilling barley or mustard between the rows.

Alongside this, of course, must be methods of destroying the shelter crop, and techniques are being carried out at three different stages.

These are, as soon as the crop is established, but before there can be any competition from the shelter plants: at what is regarded as the optimum stage, (when the beet has six to eight leaves): and when the shelter is becoming competitive with the crops.

The absence of “blows" this Spring, has prevented any comparison of the effectiveness of the various treatments. The main interest of visitors lay in the methods and timing of destruction of the shelter crops, and one thing was very clear, –the later the shelter is left, the greater the problems.

## Damage.

It has been found that when mustard was destroyed late chemically, there was appreciable damage to the beet due to the tall mustard plants bending over under the weight of the spray, and allowing the chemical to drip on to the beet leaves.

The general view was that destruction by means of an inter row, rotary hoe, appeared likely to prove most satisfactory, and it was suggested that where the shelter crop was quite tall, it could be helpful to use a forage harvester to remove some of the top growth before going in with a hoe or chemical, for final destruction.

Other Articles on the Page.
Contract price.

Price to be paid for sugar beet under 1969 contracts, is to be 136 shillings, and 6 pence per ton, for beet of 16 percent sugar content, the same as in 1968.

As is customary, there is a variation of 10 shillings per ton, up or down, in respect of each 1 percent sugar content above or below the basic 16 percent.

Sir Leonard Cooke has been appointed vice-chairman of the Sugar Board in succession to Sir Leslie Phillips, who retired at the end of last year. Sir Leonard had been a part-time member since the beginning of 1967.

One of the world's best known chemical companies, –BASF: (Badishe Anilin und Soda-Fabrik A.G., of Ludwigshafen, Germany), ( German for 'Baden Aniline and Soda Factory'), –is to enter the United Kingdom market. Its British subsidiary, (BASF, United Kingdom, Limited) is setting up a new agricultural department with headquarters at Ipswich.

The company announces that it intends to sell a wide range of agricultural chemicals. Some, such as Pyramin, are already well known, and others are to follow.

Two new official committees on the collection of residue data have been formed. These are the Committee for Analytical and Veterinary Products in Foodstuffs, and the Panel for the Collection of Residue Data, which replace respectively the Analytical Panel and the Panel on Residues of Pesticides in Food Stuffs.

Two staff changes have recently been announced by British Sugar Corporation Limited.

They are: Mr N B Davis, agriculturist at Cantley Sugar Factory, to be assistant to the Agricultural Development Director at Peterborough, in succession to Mr R A Bond, with effect from September the 1st.

Mr R A Bond, assistant to Agricultural Development Director, to be agriculturist at Cantley Sugar factory, with effect from September the 1st.

Experiments during the 1950s proved that spraying sugar beet crops with systemic, persistent aphicides decreases the incidence of yellows and increases the yield.

The Minister of Agriculture has reconstituted the Agricultural Advisory Council and the Horticultural Advisory Council, with new terms of reference.

Both councils have, among other functions, the duty of advising the Minister on the means to be adopted to encourage farmers speedily to apply the results of research.

His work on mechanisation of crop cultivations and harvesting, has won Mr J C Hawkins, head of farm buildings department, at the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering, the Royal Agricultural Society’s Research Medal for 1969.

Mr Hawkins has done much work of benefit to the cultivation and handling of sugar beet.

Two advertisements from the page: The first is the Standen SOLOBEET harvester, and the second is for Sugar Factory WASTE LIME

One man goes to harvest when
STANDEN
SOLOBEET
goes into action!
Completely self-propelled, using your own tractor unit. Big 6½ m.p.h., 6 acres a day performance. 32 ft turning circle. One-man operated. 2½ ton capacity tank. Built for the big acreages.
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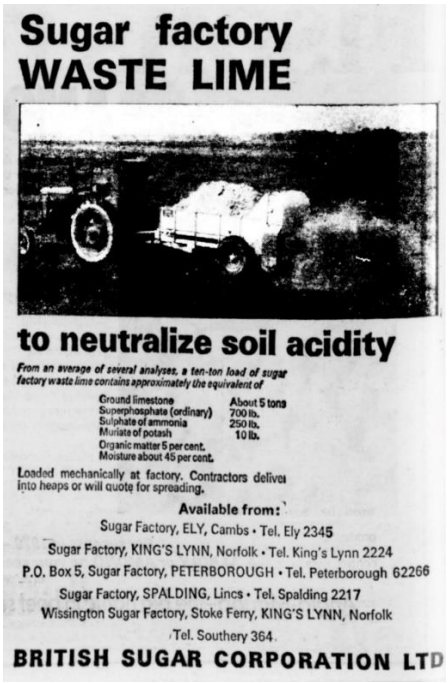
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Four Men Who Have Totalled 170 Years.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday September the 5th, 1969.

Four men, who have totalled 170 years of service at the Ely beet sugar factory, retire on October the first. They are, (from left to right), Mr Reg Spinks, of New Barns Road, Ely; (42 years, the last 20 as Welfare Officer); Mr Harold Fyson, of New Barns Avenue, Ely; (Effluent Hand, 40 years); Mr Alfred Blakeway, of Deacons Lane, Ely; (44 years, formerly shift engineer, now central workshops supervisor); and Mr Herbert Cole, of West Fen Road, Ely; (44 years shift superintendent).

**Four men who have totalled 170 years of service at the Ely beet sugar factory retire on October 1. They are (from left to right), Mr. Reg Spinks, of New Barns Road, Ely (42 years, the last 20 as Welfare Officer); Mr. Harold Fyson, of New Barns Avenue, Ely (effluent hand, 40 years); Mr. Alfred Blakeway, of Deacons Lane, Ely (44 years, formerly shift engineer, now central workshops supervisor); and Mr. Herbert Cole, of West Fen Road, Ely (44 years, shift superintendent).**

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Mid-Anglia Flu Wave Hits Firms and Schools.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, December the 18th, 1969.

Factories, schools and hospitals throughout Mid-Anglia are being hit by the flu bug, Sprites, the caravan manufacturers at Newmarket, were yesterday operating with 90 of their labour force absent, while at Einco, (Great Britain), Limited., of Saint Neots, who manufacture industrial filter units, the number absent went up from an eighth to a quarter in 24 hours.

Earlier this week, about 30 doctors, nurses and civilian employees were absent from the Royal Air Force Hospital Ely, but a spokesman said yesterday:

“It looks as if the flu is subsiding. Most of the staff are back at work, although still not feeling very strong, and the number of people still ill, has gone down to well under 20.”

The headmaster of Saint Neots Church of England Primary School, Mr Roger Henthorne, and several of his staff were unwell yesterday, but Longsands School had only six of its 77 staff absent.

The New Winshills Primary School reported 35 pupils sick, out of 185, and a third of the staff away. About 30 out of 300 were away from Eaton Socon Primary School.

Injections.

Firms which have been little affected are those which have taken the precaution of offering their employees anti flu injections.

More than half the workers at the Ely beet sugar factory had the injection, and only six or seven, out of 312 employees, were absent yesterday.

The firm's welfare and labour officer, Mr R M Lane, said yesterday. “I think this has definitely helped, but one can't tell what will happen by the end of the week.”

Almost 100 employees of W R Grace Limited, the packaging specialist at Saint Neots had “jabs" and the personnel officer, Mr Peter Wilds, reported that absenteeism was low.

One place which has escaped relatively likely is the Saffron Walden area. The Medical Officer of Health, Doctor J A Slattery, said he had heard of no cases.

***

Sugar Yield Down but Quality Up.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, January the 1st, 1970.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory campaign, the 45th since the factory opened in the 1920s, is expected to end in less than a fortnight's time.

The general manager, Mr Desmond Bradford, said yesterday: “We have given January the 10th to all farmers as the date. If there is any possibility of extending it beyond then, if there is sufficient beet to keep slicing, we shall go on for a few days.”

He said the finishing date for the campaign, which started in September, was earlier than usual. “Normally it is the end of January, but the yield is slightly lower than previous years, although, of course, a compensating factor has been the high sugar content.”

Mr Bradford said the yield looked like being fourteen and three-quarter tons an acre, about one and a quarter tons below average, but the sugar content at just over 17 percent, was about 2 percent higher.

Mechanically, the campaign had gone very smoothly. “We have had one or two minor snags over the last two or three weeks, but nothing that has seriously reduced the slice, " he said.

Because of the lower yield, the tonnage of beet dealt with, will be below the usual half million mark. Mr Bradford said it would be in the region of 450,000 tons.

He said, apart from a little difficulty caused by rain in the last two or three weeks, the weather had been good, and sugar beet growers had got on very well lifting and delivering the crop.

***

Last Year’s Sugar Beet Season Was a Campaign of Contrasts.

The Newmarket Journal, Wednesday, March the 25th, 1970.

In a year of contrasts, the 1969 to 1970 sugar beet campaign produced a yield per acre well below the average, but sugar content well above, and while providing a satisfactory result for many growers, in some areas the crop was almost a disaster.

Northamptonshire, North Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire areas experienced flooding in the early part of the year, from which growers never really recovered, but in the main a fine dry autumn meant easier and more economical harvesting and transportation.

A compensatory factor was the big jump in sugar content, but even this was not sufficient to prevent a drop in the total production of white sugar.

For the country as a whole, the average yield per acre was 13.63 tons, compared with 15.75 tons last year. Average sugar content of 16.89 percent was one of the highest on record and well above last year's figure of 15.31 percent.

Without the high sugar content, the white sugar production could have slumped to an all-time low, and even so, the current figure of 846,000 tons was 37,000 tons lower than last year's total of 883,000 tons.

All factories in the immediate area showed a drop in tonnage of beet delivered, and at Wissington, where extensive expansion works are taking place, the delivery of beet was over 93,000 tons short of last year's total.

Factory tonnages, (with last year's figures in brackets), were Bury Saint Edmunds, 641,592 tons, (721,733 tons); Ely, 435,117 tons, (485,127 tons); Kings Lynn, 480,480 tons, (538,975 tons); Peterborough, 486,356 tons, (503,557 tons); Spalding, 448,943 tons, (497,651 tons); Wissington, 262,213 tons, (355,942 tons).

At the Autumn Sugar Beet Demonstration, Mr Oswald Rose, research and development director of the British Sugar Corporation, gave warning of the stricter measures to be taken by the factories.

He said that the sub-committee were concerned with making available this year, machines for those farmers who would like to attempt using nematicides to control Docking Disorder under practical conditions.

There had been experiments, but there were a number of farmers who were very worried about the whole problem, and who would be willing to carry out control measures if the machines and chemicals became available, he declared.

Another problem in the Spring were herbicides, he said, although herbicides had greatly improved in recent years, they were still not as effective as they would like them to be. With many farmers short of labour, it was a race against time to bring about better herbicide control.

## Chairman of Beet Research Committee.

Mr. John Holmes, who farms more than 450 acres of land in Suffolk, is to succeed Sir Peter Greenwell as chairman of the Sugar Beet Research and Education Committee when Sir Peter's term of office expires next September.

The Minister of Agriculture announced this on November the 20th. Mr Holmes is to serve on the Committee as Chairman Designate until taking over as Chairman on October the 1st, 1970.

Sir Peter Greenwell has been Chairman of the Committee since 1957. He recently became Chairman of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies Limited.

Mr Holmes has been a member of Suffolk Agricultural Executive Committee since 1961 and its chairman since 1966.

The Committee advises Ministers on the drawing-up and carrying-out of annual programmes of research and education, in regard to home-grown sugar beet, which are financed from the Home-Grown Sugar Beet (Research and Education) Fund, under the terms of Section 18 of the Sugar Act, 1956.

Apart from the independent members, one of whom is Chairman. membership of the Committee includes representatives of the British Sugar Corporation, the National Farmers Unions, the Agricultural Research Council, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, for Scotland.

## Those pesticides can be dangerous.

The beet grower not only has to contend with the destruction of crops by mammals and birds, but has to comply with a mass of legislation that has grown up over the years, controlling the means by which he seeks to rid himself of these pests.

The whole question is dealt with in some depth in “Sugar Beet Pests”, a ministry publication, compiled by F G W Jones, of Rothamsted Experimental Station, and R A Dunning, of Broom’s Barn Experimental Station.

Seedling damage.

Damage by pigeons was not noticed by fieldmen until the late 1950s, small birds, (mainly sparrows), fed only on beet near farm buildings, and game bird damage to beet after singling did not occur on a noticeable scale until 1957; it is difficult to explain these changes, except that seedling damage is now more noticeable because of wider seed-spacing.

By contrast, rabbit damage has decreased with the decrease in rabbit numbers due to myxomatosis, and damage caused by rooks searching for wireworms has also decreased markedly. No birds or mammals take beet seed from the soil, although sparrows, finches and other small birds sometimes feed on ripening seed crops.

Local or national feeding may hinder the control of warm-blooded pests, even when they are clearly harmful. Wholesale destruction and methods considered cruel, soon meet with public objections, but little notice is taken of similar methods used against cold-blooded animals.

Prevention.

The Pests Act, 1954, made gin traps illegal, and since then a number of humane traps have been approved, but they must only be used in burrows or artificial tunnels, except to catch rats and mice when traps may be set in the open.

The Protection of Birds Act, 1954, and the many Orders made under it, protect wild birds generally, but those listed or added to the Second Schedule of the Act, which include wood pigeon, Sparrow, Rook, and other corvids, may be killed, or taken at any time by the owner, occupier or person authorised by them.

There are no objections to funnel or cage traps, provided the traps are visited at least once a day, and captured pests are killed humanely. Any control measures devised or used against warm-blooded pests must comply with these laws.

Below is an advertisement for May & Baker Premalox weed killer.

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Kill them in almost any soil. Even in fields where moss or peat predominate.
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Mid-Anglia Beet Crisis.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, April the 9th, 1970.

Weather delays in planting sugar beet could mean a crop well below average in yield, said the agricultural manager at Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Mr Desmond Bradford.

The next 10 days could be critical in securing the crops full potential, he said on Thursday.

“We normally reckon that the best results are secured if crops are planted during the last two weeks in March and the first in April, " he said. “So far, I reckon only about 20 percent of the crop has been planted, and the next few days will be vital. The position is much worse than usual.

“Of course, with mechanisation, new varieties and herbicides, it is not quite so important as it used to be to get crops in during this time, but it still brings the best results.”

The ground was still very cold, and quite apart from beet, farmers had a backlog of spring work to catch up on as soon as it got warmer.

About 75 percent of Mid-Anglian farmers are this year planting monogerm varieties, producing single plants, and needing little singling. This is the highest proportion since the seed was introduced five years ago.

Vietnamese tour Ely factory.

Two high-ranking Vietnamese agricultural experts were shown British farming techniques and machinery at the Dorman Sprayer Company at Ely, on Friday.

They were shown around the company’s works by the sales manager, Mr Tim Coleman, and they explained to him what sort of machinery would meet their requirements in Vietnam.

Mr Troung Dinh, Huan, director of agricultural machinery in the Ministry of Land Reform, Agriculture and Fishery, who vets all agricultural machinery before it is imported into South Vietnam, said: “I have been very impressed with some of the equipment I have seen in England.

I have been very pleasantly surprised by the welcome we have received everywhere on our tour, but unfortunately the tour has been a bit rushed.”

Mr Huan and Mr Lou Van Le, the general manager of the Central Farmers Association in South Vietnam, left Ely after lunch to go to Ramsey.

Mr Coleman said on Friday, “Mr Huan and Mr. Le will tell us what kind of machinery is suitable for conditions in Vietnam. We are specialist manufacturers and can meet their needs if we know what they are.”

He said “small hand equipment was of special interest to the Vietnamese as their fields were small and labour much easier to get than in England.”

At present, the Dorman Sprayer Company export to several countries in the Far East.

“About 15 percent of our products are exported, but we are aiming at a much higher percentage, Mr Coleman said.

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Sort Out Weeds and Beet Should be First.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, May the 28th, 1970.

If someone can come up with an answer to the weed problem, sugar beet must be a firm favourite for winning the race towards the complete mechanisation of a farm crop. It can only be a matter of time.

The development officer at Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Mr H Norris, feels the day cannot be far away. And a visit to the demonstration laid on at East Fen Farms Limited, Soham, only served to confirm this impression.

“The real solution lays with finding a satisfactory post emergent herbicide, " he commented. “There is a lot of work being done on this, and something must emerge soon.”

So, if his forecast is right, sugar beet must become the first farm crop for which it will be possible to close the gate at planting and return to the field at harvest to find a clean, healthy, high yielding crop. The problems of harvesting should mean that beet will just pip potatoes at the post.

The Soham demonstration, in the meantime, served to provide a useful testing ground for some experimental techniques designed to fill the breach, until the elusive post-emergent weed killer turns up.

One treatment which it is hoped will prove effective until then in coping with weeds is a treatment blending the two weed-killers, betanal and pyramin. The first, it is hoped, will tackle the early weeds while the other will come to grips with the later ones. A second treatment of pyramin could then be applied as a final check, before the beet itself is well established enough to be completely dominant.

The trouble is that the timing of such an application is critical, for it is essential for the climatic conditions to be just right. But it could provide a temporary solution until something less complicated and just as satisfactory comes along.

Another more novel method of weed control was illustrated at Soham. It involved fitting a rotary mower contraption on the front of a tractor which moves to mow down the weeds.

Removing beet leaves at the same time, has been found to have no serious effect on yields, and to bring a further element of weed control to the crop.

Two trials on Cambridgeshire farms last year showed that the system was worth exploring further to obtain more information about timing, the number of cuts necessary, how many beet leaves can be removed without serious loss of production, and how low the mowing attachment can be fixed without doing any damage.

Whatever the outcome, Mr Norris believes it can serve as a stop-gap measure until the right chemical comes along. The device itself is still in the prototype stage and there would be great problems in putting it into mass production. The alternative of making it available through small scale distributors would make it a quite expensive attachment.

The third aspect of the trials which caught the eye, attempts to assess the cash benefits of planting monogerm seed, (now being used by 70 percent of farmers), at different spacings, looking at six, seven, and eight-inch gaps between rows.

On five-inch rows, it has already been proved that machines are hard to use, and Mr Norris feels that 6 inches may be the best alternative without losing yield.

All these developments could help to pave the way to a brighter future for sugar beet. Two indifferent seasons this year looked like being followed by a third, because most drillings were on the late side, which usually has a telling effect on yields. Sugar content could also suffer.

The crop, though, is expected to be about average, and there could be strong recovery, given fine weather. Also, it was only to be expected that there would be some setbacks after the beet boom during the previous five years.

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Hopes Sweeter for Sugar Beet.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, September the 24th, 1970.

Prospects for the sugar beet season in the flat, green mid-Anglian fields may not be as bleak as they have been painted, according to the agricultural manager at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Mr Desmond Bradford.
Apart from those unfortunates who had to plough up crops which failed to germinate in the late, dry spring conditions, the crop in some parts show signs of being above expectations.

“The picture is really extraordinarily variable, " commented Mr Bradford. “In the Fens there are some extremely good crops, but on the mineral soils of south Cambridgeshire there are some that are very patchy indeed.”

The long drought period is the chief culprit, for what Mr Bradford describes as one of the most contrasting pictures to emerge in recent years.
Overall, the yields are expected to be about fourteen and a half tons per acre, but there is one brighter feature. In contrast, the sugar content is much higher than usual at 16 percent.

So, while the upward trend in yields, –the five-year average is sixteen and a half tons per acre, –has been checked, it could be offset by the higher quality and relative absence of waste through disease, will bring counteracting dividends.

In the country as a whole, the crop has done as well as normal. East Anglia is the only area to be hit by the poor growing conditions, –and even now it might not be too late.

“During the past week there have been signs from the factory’s field samples that the crop is making a healthy revival, and if this continues, the fears of it being a poorish season could be discounted, " Mr Bradford added.

At present, though, it is hard to predict how the sugar beet harvest will shape up. But the Ely Beet Sugar Factory are planning a slightly shorter campaign than usual, starting on October the first, three days later than last year, and finishing early in the New Year.

The operation gets a little smoother each year as mechanisation improves. For the first time for some years, the factory have managed to get sufficient local labour to avoid recruiting outside the city.

Modern farming methods are also contributing to the improvement. New machines are speeding up harvesting, and helping for the bulk of the crop to be brought in before the severe December frosts.

This year, the earliness of the cereal harvest should also help matters. Then the advent of monogerms seed, which produces single plants instead of clusters, has made a significant contribution towards simplifying the harvesting. This year, 70 percent of the region's crop was devoted to this kind of seed, which avoids the needs for singling the crop.

So, while there must be some disappointment about the crop, the chances are that the setbacks will not be as drastic as at first appeared likely. Fen blows have not caused as much damage as at first seemed evident, and the signs are that while the crop may be thinner, it could be more profitable.

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Wissington Factory Closes Early Again.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, January the 1st, 1971.

Yesterday brought to an end the sugar beet campaign at the Wissington factory, which has closed early, so that the third and final stage of the £7 million reconstruction can begin.

But the factories at Lynn and Ely will remain open for the delivery of beet until the last week in January. Their likely closing date is put at January the 25th or the 26th.

Overall, the picture is of low yields, 14 and a half, to 15 tons an acre, and high sugar content of over 17 percent, with at least one of the factories recording one of its highest figures in over 40 years.

With the late, cold start to the drilling season, and with the long drought during the summer, it was expected the crop would have suffered more severely. Individual yields have varied enormously, but the saviour seems to have been the mild autumn which has prolonged growth.

Good start.

The dry autumn months early on gave the campaign a good start, and with harvesting possible on most days, it has been one of the easiest in recent years. As a result, dirt tare has been low, but in some cases mechanical handling of the crop has led to rather higher figures for top tare.

Mr Peter Dyke, agriculturist at Wissington, said yields in his factory area had been averaging in fourteen and a half tons per acre, at around 17 percent sugar content, compared with thirteen and a half tons an acre, and 16 and a half percent sugar content last season.

“It has been a better crop all round, " he said. “Despite the late start to the season and the hot summer, we have had rains at the right time, and there has been extraordinary growth in the autumn.”

Growers in the Wissington area will deliver the remainder of their crop to Lynn and other neighbouring factories, but these extra loads are not expected to hold up delivery of beet from each of the factory’s own growers.

The reconstruction of the Wissington factory, expected to cost over £7 million, will push up slicing capacity from 2,800 to 7,200 tons per day, and will make it into the largest factory in the country, and one of the biggest in Europe.

New plant.

Much of the old building at Wissington, where there has been a sugar factory since 1925, is being demolished, new plant is being installed, and new buildings being erected. The factory area is also being revised to allow for the expansion.

Mr Peter Forster, general manager of the Lynn factory, said this week, yields in his area at around 14.4 tons an acre were slightly down on last year, but the average sugar content of over 17 percent was one of their highest.

Earlier in the campaign, the sugar content had been averaging as much as 18 to 19 percent, he said. There had been a noticeable rise in top tare this year, which was perhaps inevitable with mechanical harvesting.

Severe frost had not been a problem so far, but he hoped farmers would take steps to protect the remainder of their crop.

In the Ely factory area, average yields are slightly over 15 tons an acre are reported, with the sugar content at 17.2 percent, the third highest on record since the factory opened in 1925.

Because of the dry early autumn period, dirt tare had been one of the lowest for the factory and unlike some of the other areas, theirs had not been much affected by snow over Christmas.

Mr Irvine Rose, general manager of the Peterborough factory, said they would probably close on or around January the 20th. Yields were better than they had anticipated in September, and up on last year, although they did not quite reach the five-year average.

But, he added, there had been enormous variations between growers, owing largely to the difficult spring conditions. Some growers had got away with it, while others had fared much worse.

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Farmers to Collect Cheques.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, February the 11th, 1971.

Plans have been made for farmers to collect their cheques for sugar beet from local factories, because of the postal strike.

But a call by some farmers in the Isle of Ely, that the money should be delivered by factory fieldsman, is not being acted on.

An Ely factory spokesman said on Monday, “It is not economical to have people running around in cars delivering cheques. It would cost something like a shilling a mile.”

The cheques, the last major payment after this season's beet campaign, are to be paid on Monday. Farmers will have to prove their identity when they collect the money.

An Isle of Ely Farmers Union statement said: “There has been criticism of this method. It was felt each factory's fieldsman could have delivered the cheques.”

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Stung – for 50p.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, July the 12th, 1971.

Bounty hunters of Ely unite. There’s nothing to lose, (if you're good at dodging angry wasps), – and 50 pence to gain for each wasp’s nest you find. Ely Beet Sugar Factory are offering their employees this sum for reporting to the management any nest found on the premises.

Wasps are attracted to the sugar warehouses where raw sugar is stored in the summer. If a nest is discovered, it will be destroyed by the Urban Council. The factory works manager, Mr Thomas Lubienski, told me: “We do not have any more trouble from wasps than other people, but other British Sugar Corporation factories operate this scheme and we thought it a good idea.”

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High Hopes for a Bumper Sugar Beet Crop.

Virus warning system has worked well.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, August the 26th, 1971.

Everything has gone so well for the mid-Anglian sugar beet crop, that there are hopes that the yield will be well above the sixteen and a half tons per acre average for the past five years. The crop, worth £5,000,000 to the regions 2,500 farmers who grow it, could be a near record-breaker if there is some more sunshine, to ensure full maturity.

The phenomenal record-breaking year of 1960, still looks supremely unassailable. While preliminary samples are extremely promising, there is nothing to inspire hopes of exceeding 18.9 tons an acre.

But Mr Desmond Bradford, the agricultural manager at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory, feels there is every reason for confidence. Spot observations on random sites among the 32,000 acres of contract crops, in Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk and West Suffolk, suggest a “healthy growth, and uniformly good yields,” he said.

Compared with the problems that beset crops a few years ago, sugar beet now has few outstanding difficult diseases or pests, which it is not possible to counteract in some way.

For instance, virus troubles were a constant menace at one time. They were capable of setting back the yields by more than a ton an acre, but in the last two or three years, they have only been a minor hazard.

The introduction of a virus warning system eight years ago, seems to have brought some measure of control, so that the carry-over of the disease from season to season has been

steadily reduced. In addition, the Plant Breeding Institute, at Trumpington, are developing some virus-resistant strains, which might make this risk a thing of the past.

## Magnesium.

Magnesium deficiency in the Fen soils is another worry which has been partially counter-acted as a growing awareness of its effects, has prompted wider applications of materials which can rectify this problem.

Crops studded with high levels of bolters were another commonplace feature, but the arrival of monogerm seed, (producing single plants instead of clusters), seems to have played a part in reducing the number of these to an insignificant level.

Breeders have also developed strains less susceptible to bolting.

Monogerm seed, now used by 80 percent of the farmers with contracts at the Ely factory, has in fact, helped with solving other disadvantages, like singling and the high proportion of “doubles beets”, which used to occur with multigerm seed, which produced many plants but is now fading from the scene.

## Weather.

The shortage of hand labour, which once threatened the successful harvesting of the crop, has also become irrelevant with the advent of 100 percent mechanisation.

This year, it is expected that one or two farmers with large acreages, will be making use of some of the massive Continental harvesters, capable of taking up six and seven rows of beet at a time.

The rosy prospects for this season's crop are partly due to the favourable weather, which ensured that the bulk of it was planted by the first week in April at the ideal time.

## Corn.

The reported high profits of the British Sugar Corporation will also strengthen their argument that they are entitled to a better deal. This could be a burning harvest topic, in the National Farmers Union councils this autumn.

But before farmers can tackle their sugar beet, they will want to complete the corn harvest, which has already run into the familiar disruption from the weather.

Yields during the past three years have been 17.1 tons, 16.9 tons and 15.9 tons. It might be thought this represents a decline, but the experts feel there is nothing particularly conclusive about the range of variation, and the anticipated increase this year seems to confirm this view.

At present, the factory are planning to begin their campaign on September the 27th, depending on the progress with the corn.

***

Ely Factory All Set for Bumper Year.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, September the 27th, 1971.

At 6:30 a.m. today, the first lorry rolled into the British Sugar Corporation's Ely factory, and by 7 o'clock, the 1971 beet campaign, worth around £3,000,000 to 1,500 growers, was underway.

A bumper year is forecast. With sample yields running at seventeen and a half tons to the acre, and sugar percentages at 16.6, it could be an all-time record campaign.

This year, it is a long harvest, 18 weeks, and the Ely factory's 300 employees will be working round the clock, seven days a week until the beet is in.

For the second year running, the British Sugar Corporation have been able to do without Irish Labour.

Until last year, the 220 full-time work force was topped up with local seasonal labour, but to reach full strength, the company had to bring in Irish workers.

Last year, for the first time, the labour demand was met locally. And this year it has been the same again.

Last season's campaign showed an average yield per acre of 15.8 tons, with a sugar content of 16.1 percent.

This year's high yield and sugar content, is mainly due to the early drilling, –80 percent of the crop was in before the first week in April, –which together with good weather and relative freedom from disease, has meant first-class growth.

All told, 1,500 farmers take part in the Ely campaign, growing beet on 30,000 acres of land. And for these farmers, indications are it will be a good year: with an average sugar content of 16 percent, returns on sample yields should be in the region of £100 to £120 per acre gross, –a tidy £50 an acre profit.

***

Fire Slows Production.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, September the 30th, 1971.

Production slowed at the Ely Beet Sugar Factory last night when fire broke out in a pulp drying machine. It was nearly four hours before the beet pulp was damped down.

Five tons of pulp was destroyed, and the drying machine was slightly damaged in the blaze, which was fought by firemen from Ely and Soham.

The factory's general manager, Mr Desmond Bradford, said this morning that the fire was probably caused by a spark from the drier's coal fire.

"It slowed production down but didn't hold us up all that much because we can still keep the factory working, so long as the destruction is isolated to one machine, " he said.

The factory's campaign started on Monday, working day and night on the half a million tons of sugar beet, which will be processed before the season ends.

***

Beet Campaign Looks Set for a Record.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, October the 15th, 1971.

The autumn sugar beet campaign has got off to a promising start, with optimism both on the farm and at the factory, that it will turn out to be one of the best seasons for many years.

Growing conditions for the beet, while not ideal, have combined to produce a heavy crop, and now that rain has softened the ground, lifting has been going ahead easily.

Two of the local factories, Lynn and Ely, have now been receiving and slicing beet for over a fortnight, while the Wissington plant began its campaign last week.

Several year's work on expanding the Wissington factory has been completed, and it is due to be opened officially on Wednesday, by Mr Jim Prior, Minister of Agriculture.

Slicing.

Aim is to increase slicing capacity at the factory, from under 3,000 tons to 7,200 tons per day, but it is not expected to reach this target during the present campaign. When this figure is reached, the factory will become the largest in the country, and one of the biggest in Europe.

All three factories have reported prospects of the beet crop being well above average.

Mr Peter Dyke, agriculturist at Wissington, said they were putting the crop at the moment at over 16 tons per acre, with the sugar content of about 16 percent, continually improving with the dry, sunny weather.

He explained that there had been teething problems with new plant being brought into use for the first time, –These were being dealt with as they occurred, –but no serious future difficulties were expected.

Increased.

The Wissington factory area has been increased by half this year, taking in some farmers who previously have sent their crops to factories at Cantley, Bury Saint Edmunds, Lynn and Peterborough. Some farmers in the Ely factory area will be transferred to Wissington for next year's campaign at full capacity.

Mr Arthur Dyer, agriculturist at Lynn, said it was "a good crop, and possibly a very good crop." Sugar content was so far, over 16 percent.

"It is an extremely promising crop, and farmers should do well this year, " he commented.

With a long dry spell leading up to the start of the campaign, beet have been arriving at the Lynn factory clean and generally in good order.

But the amount of top tare in loads of beet needs watching closely. Mr Dyer said it was in growers' interests to take care to deliver loads of clean beet in good order, as particularly as the factories were now more vigilant about this.

A long season is anticipated at local factories, with processing continuing into February.

The Ely factory is now slicing at full capacity of 4,200 tons of beet per day, –about 300 tons a day more than at Lynn, –and reports above average yield, and an overall sugar content of 16.86 percent so far.

A senior factory spokesman said harvesting conditions generally had been almost ideal, which meant beet had been arriving clean.

Below is an advertisement for the Lynn Sugar Beet Factory Permit system. Ely operated a similar system. The permit system ensured that the required sugar beet loads arrived at the factories in a timely manner to enable the factory to run efficiently.

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**COMMENCING MONDAY, OCT. 18th, 1971**

| | |
|---|---|
| MONDAY, 18th OCT. | PERMIT NUMBER 3 WED. and LETTER 'C' WED. |
| TUESDAY, 19th OCT. | PERMIT NUMBER 3 THUR. & LETTER 'C' THUR. |
| WEDNESDAY, 20th OCT. | PERMIT NUMBER 3 FRI. and LETTER 'C' FRI. |
| THURSDAY, 21st OCT. | PERMIT NUMBER 4 WED. and LETTER 'D' WED. |
| FRIDAY, 22nd OCT. | PERMIT LETTER 'D' MON. and LETTER 'D' TUES. LETTER 'D' THURS. & LETTER 'D' FRI. |
| SATURDAY, 23rd OCT. | PERMIT NUMBER 5 SAT. and LETTER 'E' SAT. |

**WEEK 5 PERMITS will be called up week commencing MONDAY, 25th OCT.**

**Please communicate with our Fieldmen in your area if these instructions are not understood.**

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Second Biggest West Norfolk Beet Crop.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, December the 17th, 1971.

West Norfolk's second ever heaviest crop of sugar beet will prolong the campaign at the district's three sugar factories into February.

The crop is yielding well over 2 tons an acre better than last autumn, and the average yield is expected to be near the record crop of 1960.

Good weather throughout the growing season, and an exceptionally healthy crop have produced sixteen and a half to seventeen and a half tons of beet an acre, and although sugar content at sixteen and a half percent is below the 1970 figure, it is still above average.

An early spring enabled most farmers to drill their crop in March or during the first two weeks of April, –and this is put at one of the main reasons for the bumper crop.

The mild autumn has also prolonged the growing period, even into December.

With the campaign likely to go on longer than any for several years, the factories have again stressed the need to protect beet in clamps against frost.

“Growers need to get their remaining acreages of beet out of the ground and into properly made clamps as soon as possible, " said Mr Arthur Dyer, Agriculturist at Lynn factory.

“They should have straw ready to protect them when frost is imminent.”

Delayed.

Both Wissington and Lynn factories overcame the troubles which slowed processing and delayed deliveries early in the season.

At Lynn the problem was a boiler which was soon put right.

At Wissington's £10 million reconstructed factory, “teething troubles” with new plant caused considerable delays during October, and some beet had to be diverted to other factories.

Then six trouble-free weeks enabled the factory almost to catch up with deliveries until further trouble last weekend.

Mr Dyer said that in the Lynn factory area, yields had been averaging 16 and a half, to 17 tons an acre, at 16.6 percent sugar, compared with the 1960 record crop of 17.1 tons per acre. Last year, average yield was 14.29 tons an acre, at 17 percent sugar.

Clamps.

Mr Peter Dyke, agriculturist at Wissington, put average yield in his factories area at about 17 tons an acre, --two and a quarter ton better than 1970, and within one and a quarter ton of the 1960 record, which was on a much smaller acreage.

Sugar content, at 16 and a half percent, is half a percent below the 1970 figure.

He said there had been a considerable improvement in protecting beet in clamps, as a result, he thought of higher prices this season, and of the high yields which prolonged the campaign.

A spokesman at Ely factory, estimated average yield in his area at 17 and a half tons an acre, at 16.8 percent sugar, compared with 18 tons per acre in 1960.

Last year beet averaged 15.86 tons per acre, at 17.3 percent sugar.

The three factories all expect to continue receiving beet during the first week of February, with a possible end to the campaign on February the 8th.

***

Yields Soar as Beet Campaign Closes at Ely.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, January the 27th, 1972.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory campaign, now nearing its end, after a non-stop run of more than four months, will produce one of the highest-ever sugar yields per acre, a factory spokesman says.

The present campaign, the 47th, started on September the 27th, is expected to finish about February the 10th or the 11th.

The spokesman said yesterday, it looked as though the yield of 18.4 tons an acre would be the second highest. The average sugar content of around 16.7 was very good, but not quite as high as last year.

By the time the campaign closes, the factory will have dealt with more than 500,000 tons of sugar beet, –an above average total.

The spokesman said that because of the weather, it has been one of the best seasons for harvesting. The condition of the crop had stayed excellent throughout.

“Apart from one or two minor mechanical setbacks, we have had an excellent run,” he said.

***

A Record Yield for Sugar Beet.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, February the 24th, 1972.

The Ely beet sugar factory has had its most successful campaign since 1960, Cambridgeshire Farmers’ Union executive were told.

The average yield was 18.4 tons per acre, compared with 18.9 in 1960, said the county representative to the factory, Mr W Hatley.

But Mr Hatley pointed out that on sugar content the figures were superior. This was 16.54 compared with 14.59 twelve years ago, making it a most successful season because it was the sugar content that was the most important factor.

***

Rains Push Up Beet Crop Yield.

Rural Scene by David Waterson.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, August the 24th, 1972.

The recent rainfalls came just in time to stimulate sugar beet growth, and there are now high hopes that the yields could be in the 16 and a half tons bracket.

The mid-Anglian crop, worth £3 million to 1,500 growers, will be lifted once cereal harvesting has been nearly completed, and the British Sugar Corporation factory at Ely is getting prepared for its 48th campaign, spanning about 18 weeks.

Around 300 employees will be working round the clock seven days a week, until all the beet is in from the 32,000 acres of contract crops in Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk and West Suffolk.

Confidence.

The agricultural manager at Ely, Mr Desmond Bradford, feels there is every reason for confidence in the crop, keeping abreast of the five-year average at just over the 16-ton mark.

“Prospects have definitely been improved by the recent rainfalls, " he commented. “Some crops on the South Cambridgeshire chalks were looking distinctly unhappy and patchy, but the picture has changed and they should pick up.”

More rain and sunshine are needed to ensure the crop reaches full maturity. Last year produced near record crops, with yields running at 17 and a half tons an acre, and sugar percentages at 16.6.

But the phenomenal record-breaking year of 1960 still looks unassailable, with nothing to inspire hopes of exceeding the 18.9 tons an acre achieved then. There may be a chance though, of coming close to last year's fourth higher sugar content, of 16.86 percent.

Most of this year's crop was drilled before the first week in April, with monogerm seed, now used by 90 percent of farmers with contracts at the Ely factory.

Although the crop is relatively clear from disease, the dryness has hampered growth in some areas. There are a few examples of bolting, but the production of new varieties resistant to the hazard are making this a problem of the past.

More farmers, especially in the Fens, are also going in for varieties like those bred at the Plant Breeding Institute, at Trumpington, which are resistant to virus disease. About 30 percent of farmers who have difficulty with this disease, are taking advantage of the material now available to overcome it.

The crop is also becoming increasingly mechanised, and Mr Bradford feels that with improved chemical treatments for weeds, better varieties and husbandry techniques, it won't be long before the crop is 100 percent mechanised.

“This is the trend and it is well on the way to being achieved, " he commented. “Compared with the problems that beset crops a few years ago, beet now has few outstanding difficult diseases of pests, which it is not possible to counteract in some way. Magnesium deficiency in the Fen soils is another worry which has been partially counteracted as a growing awareness of the effects, has prompted wider applications of materials which can rectify the problem.

Breakdown.

The last campaign was marred by the breakdowns at the new factory at Wissington, near Southery. Teething troubles in the highly sophisticated model plant, meant that the factory could not accept earlier deliveries from contract growers. Some was diverted to Ely.

Since then, Wissington has put its house in order, and it is hoped that the factory will be in full working order this year, and will help Ely to cope with some of the high output from the Fens, the main area of production.

All the indications are that it will be a good year, with returns on sample yields in the region of £100 to £120 an acre gross, a profit of about £50 an acre.

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More Sugar – Less Beet.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, September the 27th, 1972.

The Ely Beet Sugar factory opened its 48th sugar processing campaign yesterday, and it may be dealing with slightly less tonnage, but a higher sugar content.

A spokesman said: “Samples that we have taken, indicate that the crops have suffered from the drought, and the yield looks like being below average. But the sugar content is promising, and would appear to be going to be above average. But it is always difficult to calculate it at this time of the year, because if we get some heavy rains, the roots would swell and the sugar would go down.”

The factory will be handling just under half a million tons of beet, delivered by lorry, at a daily rate of 500 loads. Around 4,000 tons of beet will be sliced every 24 hours.

About 70 casual workers have been taken on to augment the permanent staff of 230.

***

Beet Hopes Dashed.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, September the 29th, 1972.

The cold spring and dry summer, have dashed early hopes that this year's sugar beet might yield as well as the record crop of 1971.

In West Norfolk and Fenland, –where the beet harvesting campaign is due to begin shortly, – crops are expected to produce several tons an acre less than last year.

But there are hopes that the crop will still be better than average.

The first of the factories to open will be Wissington, the largest in Europe, which will begin receiving and slicing beet on Monday, September the 25th.

Ely starts its campaign the next day, while Lynn opens its weighbridge on October the 2nd.

Mr Peter Dyke, agriculturist at Wissington, said he was expecting a fifteen and a half ton an acre crop, compared with the record yield of eighteen and a half tons per acre last year, with sugar content close to 16 percent.

“Samples we have taken so far have been rather disappointing, " he said.

“Despite the early drilling and health of the crop, it has not grown as well as expected. This has been largely due to cold soil conditions during April, May and June.”

The crop generally gave the impression of being heavier than it actually was. In terms of weight, it was 20 percent lighter than at this time last year.

Bigger area.

Mr Dyke said an additional problem was the amount of late germinating weeds in some crops, –these had not been controlled by the early applied herbicides.

The Wissington factory will this season be receiving beet from the whole of its enlarged area stretching from within a few miles of Norwich, to March and Guyhirn.

It is expected to be slicing up to 6,500 tons of beet a day, compared with its full capacity of 7,200 tons daily.

Mr L Arthur, general manager for Lynn and Wissington factories, said a crop of around 16 tons an acre was anticipated from the Lynn area.

Retarded.

Low soil temperatures in the spring, coupled with prolonged dry weather during August had retarded growth, he said.

The rain in September would help the crop to recover to some extent, and would also soften the ground for harvesting.

A spokesman for Ely Factory, said they were expecting the crop to produce about fifteen and a half tons an acre, at up to 16 percent sugar.

There had been a tendency for more of the crop to bolt this year.

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An advertisement below for the C T Mountain manufactured “Sample Master” Sugar Beet Cleaner Loader.

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Sugar Factory Takes Extra Loads in Crisis.

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, November the 7th, 1972.

Spalding sugar factory is helping to process beet from growers who would normally send their crop to the Peterborough factory, where a mystery explosion has cut production.

The Peterborough factory is having to, “farm out”, all its work to other factories for about a week, while an inquiry is held into the cause of the explosion.

Apart from Spalding, Kings Lynn, Wissington and Ely are also taking extra beet, and the Peterborough factory is attempting to deliver 600 loads each day to them.

At Spalding, the extra work has meant a slight reduction in the amount of loading by South Lincolnshire growers.

Vagaries of the weather during the growing season, when the South Lincolnshire crop was subjected to abnormal cold and baking heat, are reflected in the beet so far delivered to the Spalding sugar factory.

Lighter.

With about 25 percent of the crop already processed, it is estimated the total crop this year will be about 3 tons an acre lighter than last year, when there was a record 19.86 tons to the acre.

But crops are proving very variable according to where they are grown. On the good silt land, some crops of up to 20 tons have been lifted. But it is a different story on the higher land.

There is a brighter outlook for growers over sugar content.

Since the campaign began in September, with the sugar content surprisingly low, it has risen until it is now around 18 percent, higher than usual at this time of year.

Mr B K Morrish, agriculturist at the factory, considers this reflects the absence of rain in August and September, which, at the same time, unfortunately kept root weights static.

He feels there is little growth left in the crop, even if it gets the much-needed rain.

Yellowing.

There is a lot of yellowing in the tops he says, due to a measure of dehydration in August when the crop got, “quite a cooking.”

Growers have benefited from the cleaner conditions for loading, with the dirt tare running at around 8 lbs to the hundredweight of beet delivered, much lower than usual.

Mr Morrish has been checking his weather records, and finds that June was the most sunless since 1954, following a very cold May. But August was the sunniest for 11 years.

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Beet Crop Well Up to Average.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, January the 2nd, 1973.

The final acres of sugar beet are now being lifted in West Norfolk and Fenland, in a season much better than many growers had dared to hope a few months ago.

Despite a cold spring, an exceptionally dry summer and early autumn, sugar beet has produced a crop well up to average. The disappointment is that it does not compare with the record tonnage grown last season.

As well as holding up growth, the dry start to the autumn produced hard conditions for lifting the early crop. Since then, rain and freedom from sharp frost has helped the harvest.

14 and a half tons.

Mr Peter Dyke, agriculturist at Europe's largest beet sugar factory at Wissington, said the crop in his area was averaging 14 and a half tons an acre, at 16 and a half, to 17 percent sugar content.

The below average yield was compensated by the high percentage of sugar in the beet. The bonanza crop of 1971, produced an average of 18 and a half tons an acre, at about 16 percent sugar.

The multi-million-pound Wissington factory has been operating near its full slicing capacity of 7,200 tons of beet a day for about two months, and has been free from the many troubles which dogged the campaign there last season.

In common with other factories at Lynn and Ely, Wissington has been processing substantial tonnages of beet, diverted from Peterborough when that factory was hit by a burst boiler.

Mr Dyke said he expected the Wissington factory to finish its campaign during the last full week of January, probably January the 24th or 25th.

In the Lynn factory area, agriculturist Mr Arthur Dyer is predicting a15-ton-an-acre crop, at about 16 and three-quarter percent sugar. Average sugar content is now about 17.10 percent, but this is likely to drop during the final weeks of the campaign.

He said that although farmers had generally taken care of their beet in clamps, some had been delivering crops containing rather too many weeds and other trash.

“As conditions become more competitive as we go into the common market, we must ensure that the beet we buy from farmers is a first-class product, " he said. “If it is not, I am pretty sure we shall reject it.”

He thought the campaign at Lynn would end between January the 22nd and the 24th.

In the Ely factory area, average yield is put at 13 and a half tons an acre, at about 17.4 percent sugar. It too expects to finish processing beet towards the end of the month.

Growers who have applied for an additional acreage of sugar beet for the coming season can expect to hear if they have been allocated more during the next two or three weeks.

Nationally, an extra 25,000 acres of beet are to be grown this year, to ensure that Britain produces its full quota of sugar. This represents a 5 percent expansion, and is being distributed among growers in each factory area.

Farmers in West Norfolk and Fenland are keen to grow more sugar beet, the most consistently profitable arable crop on the farm.

Extra acres.

Mr Dyer, with an extra 1,200 to 1,500 acres to allocate in the Lynn factory area, said this week that they were trying to give increased acreages as fairly as possible.

Many farmers would be allocated an extra 5 percent, although some with a fairly high proportion of their land in beet already, and also others with contract acreages below 20 acres, were less likely to benefit.

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Drilling Early Boosts Beet.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, January the 25th, 1973.

Cutting out the crop losses during harvesting, and early drilling, were two key factors in improving the profitability of sugar beet, Mr Desmond Bradford, the agriculturist, at the Ely Beet Sugar factory, claimed at a meeting at Fisons Agrochemical Division, Chesterford Park Research Station.

Yields had increased from 12.54 tons, to 16.35 tons an acre during the past 10 years, he said. Now, 78 percent of the seed planted was pelleted monogerm, with other types only

occupying 22 percent of the acreage.

Earlier.

Farmers were now drilling earlier than they used to, and they had a wide range of new equipment at their disposal. It was equally important to control virus yellows, if output was to be maintained, then there would have to be increased yields, which were easier to get than improving the quality of the crop.

“We have come a long way with a crop, but we have still got a long way to go,” he remarked. “We want improved chemical treatments, and it is noticeable that in this coming year, liquid fertilisers looked like being used more widely.”

Doctor Andrew Dunning, of Broom’s Barn Experimental station, near Newmarket, spoke of some of the difficulties of wide spacing for sugar beet.

Fertilisers.

Experiments had shown, that with one and a half inch spacing, each plant was attacked by 4 millipedes. On four and a half inch spacing, this increased to 9 millipedes, and with nine-inch spacing to eleven.

On these same spacings, there was a likelihood that 7 percent, 15 percent, and 18 percent of the plants would be damaged by pests or disease.

He speculated on whether fertiliser was always being applied in the right places on the crop, and referred to the possibility of studying the shallow ridging of beet crops, as had been done in the United States and Canada to help protect it, and improve access ability.

Photograph and caption below:
Caption reads:

Standen's of Ely, have great hopes, that this new continental sugar beet harvester will stave off continental competition in trailer machines, and win new export orders in the Common Market, quite apart from their strong trade with Greece and Japan. The basic price will be £2,000, extras costing a further £500.

*Standens of Ely have great hopes that this new continental sugar beet harvester will stave off continental competition in trailer machines and win new export orders in the Common Market quite apart from their strong trade with Greece and Japan. The basic price will be £2,000, extras costing a further £500.*

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## Warning of Severe Blows.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, March the 15th, 1973.

Conditions are ripe for devastating Fen Blows this spring. The unusually dry winter, which followed on a similarly dry autumn, have left the light black peats in a crumbly, powdery condition.

This means they will be in a highly susceptible state in the high winds which usually descend on vulnerable seedbeds in March and April.

The warning for farmers to prepare themselves for the worst, comes from the agriculturist manager at Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Mr Desmond Bradford, who is anxious that farmers should not suffer the devastation that occurred with last year's sugar beet crops. There has only been just over an inch of rain so far this year, with February “fill-dyke” failing to live up to its reputation.

The blows came unusually late last year, destroying 1,500 acres of seed beds towards the end of May, when re-drilling is not the straightforward solution it is, if they come earlier in the season.

The damage represented 5 percent of the beet crop in the Ely factory area, not as bad it is true, as the 10,000 acres ruined in the worst onslaught 20 years ago, but particularly critical because it came so late in the season when there was no possibility of achieving the best yields realised through early drilling.

Despite the predictability of blowing, when it is reckoned that one year in four will see most Fenland farmers in trouble, very few, it seems, consider taking any kind of preventative action. In fact, at a farmer’s meeting at Ely, revealed that only 20 percent of farmer’s take adequate counter-measures.

The most satisfactory solution seems to be inter-planting beet with mustard, a device which has been perfected in the past eight years by Mr Stanley Rice, at Prickwillow, one of the most susceptible areas for blowing.

### Unscathed.

Last year there was havoc all around his farm, but the 60 acres he had inter-planted with mustard, (the first time he had done this job on such a large scale), ensured that his crop emerged unscathed, while others had to be re-drilled, some as many as three times.

The only trouble is getting rid of the mustard, which has to be destroyed by Whitsun if it is not to compete seriously with the crop.

Most years this might be unnecessary, but Mr Rice has found that the insurance it provided last year was well worthwhile, though his onion crop, which was not similarly protected, suffered considerable damage.

The difficulty is finding the manpower to carry out this operation at a busy time of the year. On the other hand, losing a valuable crop is going to provide twice the amount of work, and a crop which is going to be inferior, as many re-drilled crops were in the Ely district last year.

Some farmers have found it is a good idea to allow weeds to grow, but the snag here is that these don't always come where needed.

A Mildenhall farmer has tried using his cultivating implements at right angles to the prevailing directions of the Fen winds, but this presents difficulties when it is time to carry out hoeing operations.

Often it is impossible to tell where the beet is, if there has been a blow.

Mr R Steele, of West Row has been growing barley in between his beet crops for the past eight years, but he admits that last year he came unstuck in leaving two acres which suffered from the blows, while a neighbour's 18-acre crop, also untreated, remained intact.

Mr Roger Morris, who farms at Waterbeach and Stretham, believes that if farmers on the edge of blow areas do the "obvious things", they should escape blow damage.

Damage.

He feels it is wrong to overwinter the soil, if this is done, the soil is broken down, and there is a frost mould, which can later pave the way for blow damage.

Instead, the ploughing should be done in the spring, and then rolled and harrowed as little as possible, with the beet being drilled shortly afterwards.

Those who run into blows damage are advised by Mr Bradford not to be too precipitate in replanting. "It's quite surprising sometimes what damage seedlings were recovered from, " he said.

"Really, it's best to wait and see if the crowns of seedlings are in good condition. It may be several days before a decision can be taken.

Certainly, it is a most difficult decision to have to take in the middle of the season."

But with conditions as they are, it seems that farmers this year will have little excuse if they're caught in a blow's crisis.

They could get away with it, given luck, without going to the extent of shelter crops, which pose severe management problems at a high labour period.

On the other hand, with the danger this year more menacing than in the past, the extra work now, could avoid a lot of extra work later on.

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Ely Sugar Plant May Get Silos.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, May the 17th, 1973.

Two giant silos are planned by the British Sugar Corporation for their Ely factory for sugar refining. Until now, raw sugar produced at the factory has been sent away for refining.

The erection of the 200 feet high silos, planned to start in two years, has been recommended for county planning go-ahead, by Ely Urban Council.

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Sugar Profits Could Double.

By our city staff.

The Scotsman, Tuesday, July the 17th, 1973.

Common Market membership may bring big benefits to the British Sugar Corporation, according to the chairman, Sir Gerald Thorley, but it will not happen this year.

The current year to end-September should produce profits of £7.2 million, a drop of about £500,000 on the previous year. That forecast was enough to set British Sugar shares back 10 pence, at 535 pence yesterday.

But next year, which marks the first of the five-year transitional period under the European Economic Community agricultural policy, will undoubtedly push up group profits, perhaps as high as £15,000,000.

Sir Gerald and his colleagues, have decided on this, “early opportunity”, of preparing shareholders for the changes involved, which suggests that profits will increase in 1973-74, by between four and eight million pounds.

If this seems contrary to phase 2 of Government policy, Sir Gerald explains that because the European price structure for sugar is internationally agreed, it is largely excluded from the UK's counter-inflation programme.

With their capital spending now well advanced, British Sugar expect to liberalise dividend policy, which has been restricted for many years by official policy and cash-flow considerations.

Sir Gerald, whose company run all of Britain's 17 beet factories, indicated he would oppose a takeover bid by Tate and Lyle, who operate most of the UK's port refineries geared to handling Commonwealth sugar.

“Any such merger in itself would leave the basic problem of excess refining capacity unresolved, " he said.

Two possible courses appeared open, –either to leave the UK sugar industry as at present constituted, but with “some reduction” in port refining capacity, or to implement the corporation's own proposals, “which we continue to be ready to discuss.”

He said his directors preferred an industry divided into two parts, but in coming up with their plan, were “influenced by the belief that a viable ongoing UK sugar industry is important nationally.”

A statement later from Tate and Lyle said they could not accept Sir Gerald's statement.

“The future of the UK sugar industry is still under discussion with the Government, and the board have been asked to keep the talks confidential.”

Meanwhile, British Sugar's interim dividend, is going up from 4 to 5.25 percent, on October the 1st.”

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Prospects Good for Sugar Beet.

The Rural Scene, by David Waterson.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, August the 23rd, 1973.

The three and a half million-pound mid-Anglian sugar beet crop could be the best since the record-breaking year of 1960, according to the Ely factory agriculturist, Mr Desmond Bradford. An average yield around the 17 tons an acre mark is expected from the 1,500 growers in the area.

The success of the crop is due to favourable weather conditions during development, early drilling and better chemical weed control.

Mr Bradford says the top weight is high, and the sugar content is higher than it has been for the past three years at this time, –an average of 12.5 percent.

It is still early days yet, and there is every possibility that it will exceed the 17 percent obtained last year when Ely was placed fourth in the national chart.

Although there is some evidence of virus damage appearing from aphids on mid-Anglian crops at present, it does not look as if this will be as serious as was forecast.

The 49th campaign will span about 18 weeks, with around 300 employees working round the clock seven days a week, until all the beet is in from the 33,000 acres of contract crops in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk and West Suffolk.

“The prospects look very bright indeed,” said Mr Bradford. “It is likely to be the best crop for many years, although an awful lot could happen between now and the factory opening. Up to now, there have been relatively few problems.”

With good progress being made with the cereal harvest, it is planned that the Ely factory should open on Tuesday, September the 25th, to process nearly 500,000 tons of beet in the 18-week campaign.

The installation of a new 50 feet Weighbridge, will enable the factory to cater for much larger vehicles coming in at a daily rate of 500 loads.

On the technical side, Mr Bradford says that it appears that about 70 percent of farmers are now using monogerm seed, which brings advantages in drilling, mechanisation and weed control.

But there are still a lot of farmers, particularly in the Fens, who prefer the older polyploid types, which they believe bring higher yields.

Whether they will be persuaded to change will depend on the results from the new varieties on trial at the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, in Cambridge. More farmers, though, are taking advantage of the new varieties from the Plant Breeding Institute, at Cambridge, which are resistant to virus disease.

But it is the politics of the crop which is the main bone of the contention at present. Growers in the Ely area, as in the country generally, have been given new contracts to fit in with Common Market conditions. This has allowed growers with more than 20 acres of beet to plant 5 percent more, and those with less to arrange a proportionate increase.

The crop could become even more important to the area if the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Joseph Godber, can succeed in persuading the Common Market Commission in Brussels, that Britain is entitled to a larger acreage, quite apart from the 1.4 million tons of sugar, the Community is under an obligation to take from Commonwealth countries.

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Autumn Sugar Beet.

Proposals for the future of the UK sugar industry.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, September the 25th, 1973.

Sir Gerald Thorley, Chairman of the British Sugar Corporation Limited, spells out the Corporation's proposals for the future of the UK sugar industry, in an interim report to shareholders for the 53 weeks, ending the 30th of September, 1973.

In my statement dated the 17th of January, 1973, circulated with the last annual accounts, I made the following remarks: –

“In my statement last year, I reported that the Corporation, together with Manbre and Garton Limited, Tate and Lyle Limited and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, had subscribed to a study by independent consultants, to assess and report on the economic and financial benefits which might be derived from a reorganisation of the United Kingdom sugar manufacturing and refining industry.

The six original countries, comprising the EEC, (European Economic Community), have in total, an excess of sugar production over their own consumption.

Consequently, in the negotiations with the British Government on the entry terms for the United Kingdom, although the Six agreed to consider favourably the continued import into the enlarged Community, of sugar from the developing Commonwealth countries, this did not apply to quota imports of 335,000 tons from Australia, following the termination of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement in 1974. Furthermore, under the new conditions, it will be more profitable for the Corporation to make white sugar direct from production at all its factories, than to make raw sugar in three of them, as at present.

Thus, there will be a substantial reduction of raw sugar available in the United Kingdom for port refining from these two sources.

On the other hand, it is confidently expected that when the Australian quota is cut off, or phased out after 1974, the UK quota of beet sugar production will be increased, and the Corporation would expect to obtain a share of such increase.

Division.

In principle, the Corporation favours the division of the UK sugar industry into two parts: the one part based on sugar beet, and deriving its raw material from UK sources; the other part based on sugar cane, and deriving its raw material from non-UK sources. The two main reasons for this attitude can be briefly summarised as follows:

1, A monopoly situation within the UK would be avoided, enabling sugar users to have alternative sources of supply, and 2, both sections of the industry could continue to serve the interests of their respective suppliers of raw material.

However, as you may know, on the 1st of February,1973, agreement was reached in Brussels on the initial prices of white and raw sugar, the minimum prices for sugar beet, and the level of the refining margin. The level of the refining margin, whilst of no great consequence to the Corporation, is of importance to the port refiners.

## Reduced.

Up to the 1st of February, 1973, the refining margin permitted to the UK port refiners was £17 per ton. As a result of the agreement reached in Brussels, the refining margin was effectively reduced to £12.77 per ton, at which level the bulk of port refining in the UK becomes uneconomic.

Consequently, the Minister of Agriculture announced in the House of Commons on the 28th of March, 1973, the payment of a subvention, (subsidy), to the port refiners of £4.23 per ton for a temporary period.

The EEC refining margin was further reduced on the 1st of July 1973, to approximately £12 a ton, and the Minister of State for Agriculture, stated in the House of Commons on the 10th of July, 1973, that the gap of £5 to be bridged by Parliament, could not continue beyond the period of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement at the end of 1974.

The supply of raw sugar to the port refining industry will, over a period, be reduced. This is due to the exclusion of 335,000 tons from Australia after 1974, and to a reduction of some 250,000 tons from the Corporation, as it is more economic to produce white sugar direct from production.

It is clear, therefore, that a change in the structure of the UK sugar industry will occur, involving a reduction in port refining capacity. It is also clear, that unless subvention payments are continued, or an improved refining margin negotiated, any such restructuring must be based on the ongoing beet sugar industry. The beet sugar industry is, and will continue to be, both efficient and profitable, and capable of assuming a considerable tonnage of off-season refining of cane raw sugar, without the necessity for any subvention payments.

## Proposal.

Accordingly, and at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Corporation agreed to join in a study to consider the problem afresh and, in particular, the possibility of creating a unified UK sugar industry.

As a result, the Corporation has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which, if implemented, would:

(1), produce a unified UK sugar industry, which is viable as to the future, can effectively serve the UK consumer, and which is adapted to EEC conditions.

(2), provide a practical means of refining up to 1.4 million tons of sugar from the developing Commonwealth countries from 1975, without the necessary for subvention payments, and,

(3), not be detrimental, in the opinion of your directors, to the prospects of the Corporations, employees, beet growers or shareholders.

The main feature of the Corporation's proposals is the utilisation of our factory capacity during the off-season, to refine raw cane sugar at low cost.

Recently there has been comment in the newspapers, that as a means of re-organising the UK sugar industry, Tate and Lyle Limited, would make a bid for the Corporation.

Such an eventuality would involve the creation of a conglomerate, a large part of which would have little or no relevance to any reorganisation of the UK sugar industry.

Any such merger, in itself, would leave the basic problem of excess refining capacity unresolved. Nor would a merger deal with the inadequate refining margin, unless the Corporation could be acquired on such unfavourable terms to shareholders, that its future prospects compensated the port refiners for the reduction in their refining profits.

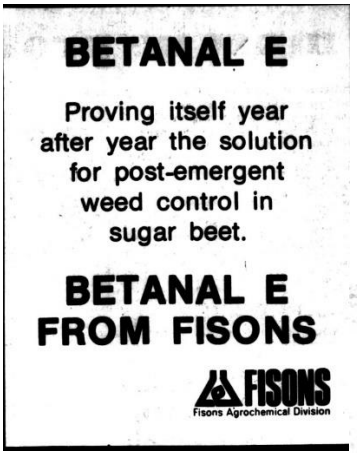
There would appear to be two possible courses of action: –

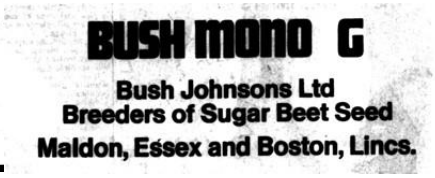
(a), to leave the United Kingdom sugar industry as presently constituted, with some reduction in port refining capacity. In addition, either the continued payment of a subvention, or the negotiation of an improved refining margin will be necessary.

(b), to implement your corporation’s own proposals, which we continue to be ready to discuss.

In agreeing to participate in discussions, your directors, in spite of their preference for an industry as at present divided into two parts, one supplied by cane, and the other by beet, were influenced by the belief that a viable ongoing UK sugar industry is important nationally, and therefore a matter in which your corporation should be prepared to play a proper part.

Three advertisements below, firstly Anglo Maribo seed, followed by Betanal E post-emergent weed control from Fisons, and finally Bush Mono G, sugar beet seed from Bush Johnsons Limited.


BETANAL E
Proving itself year after year the solution for post-emergent weed control in sugar beet.
BETANAL E FROM FISONS
FISONS
Fisons Agrochemical Division

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Sugar Factory Paralysed as 50 Stop Work.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, September the 26th, 1973.

Ely Beet Sugar factory ground to a halt last night, –just 16 hours after a new processing campaign had started, –as hourly paid process workers began their threatened unofficial 48-hour strike. They are dissatisfied with a wage agreement negotiated in the spring between the British Sugar Corporation and unions.

About 50 men are thought to be involved. Most belong to the National Union of Agricultural Workers, some to the Transport and General Workers Union. Some are non-union.

A factory spokesman said today: we are at a standstill. They went off shift at 10 o'clock last night, and will resume again at 10 o'clock tomorrow night.

Unsatisfactory.

A National Union of Agricultural Workers shop steward, Mr Cecil Beezley, said that strike action was voluntary. He did not know exactly how many men had stayed out.

The National Union of Agricultural Workers district organiser, Mr George Parker, said that the wage agreement negotiated early this year, was limited to the Government's £1-plus four-percent restriction.

"This is totally unsatisfactory to them, and has been to millions of other workers, and it is just one way in which they are showing how they feel about it.

The British Sugar Corporation have given an assurance that if regulations are relaxed, they will re-open negotiations with the unions.

We're not worried yet—beet farmers.
By our agricultural correspondent, David Waterson.

Only if the strike goes on for more than a week will it start to have serious repercussions on the hundreds of farmers using the Ely factory.

At present, said the Cambridgeshire Farmers Union secretary, Mr Derek Crawley, only a relatively small amount of beet had been lifted.

"I don't think it should be much of a problem if the strike is settled fairly quickly," he said. "But if it goes on into next week, I would imagine that growers' contract arrangements for delivery times could be upset."

"The growers using the factory are mostly on the lighter land north of Cambridge, and here the beet would not be lifted until later on anyway."

One of the area's largest beet growers, Mr Hugh Gingell, of Horningsea Manor, thought it would have very little effect early on. Contract arrangements are not binding for the first few days of the campaign, and growers are not restricted on times and dates for deliveries.

"It has only been possible to lift beet within the last 10 days, " he commented. "A lot of it in the Fens is still growing, and wouldn't be lifted yet anyway."

“At this stage, the strike is a mere pinprick, but if it continued for very long, then the impact could be more widespread. I am not unduly worried yet. One week, sooner or later in starting, is unlikely to make a lot of difference.”

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Call for Extra Sugar Factory.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, November the 13th, 1973.

Fenland farmers want the Government to allow the building of an independent factory for processing sugar, –as a rival to the British Sugar Corporation.

Isle of Ely branch of the National Farmers Union, agreed unanimously last week that the union's headquarters team should put pressure on the Government to secure additional facilities for processing sugar.

This is to allow an expansion of sugar beet growing in this country when the Australians cease supplying sugar to Britain after 1974.

Application.

Mr. John Allpress said that if the British Sugar Corporation would not expand their factories, the Government ought to sanction the application by Tate and Lyle to build a large independent factory.

Mr. David Morbey, headquarters delegate, said that although the union had been assured, the British Sugar Corporation was making plans into expansion until it was more aware of the future.

The Australian quota would not, he said, be taken over by British farmers in one year. This would probably be spread over three years. Mr Albert Deptford said this was most unsatisfactory and might result in an increased acreage being turned down if the Corporation was not able to process sugar from this additional crop.

Concerned.

The report of the Small Farmers Committee was concerned with the new farm structure schemes and grants available for amalgamating uncommercial buildings with viable units.

The committee felt the schemes were not being used to the full extent, –possibly, it was stated, through lack of publicity, –and wishes to make it clear to potential outgoers with uncommercial units, that there was nothing to stop them receiving a grant for amalgamation, and then taking a larger holding afterwards.

The committee also felt the exclusion of the first ten acres from any grant should be looked into, and that county councils were not making holdings large enough, as these could go up to a maximum limit of 900 standard man days, which could be related to a holding of about 170 acres.

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## Farmers Campaign for Larger Beet Process Plant.

The Rural Scene by David Waterson.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, January the 10th, 1974.

Cambridgeshire farmers last week stepped up their campaign for a better deal from the British Sugar Corporation, when they warned a high-ranking corporation official, that unless efforts were made to enlarge factory capacity to ensure quicker campaigns, many farmers would have second thoughts about growing the crop.

During a sugar beet conference confrontation at the Francis Jeeps Farm College, Milton, a former Cambridgeshire Farmers Union chairman, and the branch representative watching the farmer's interests at the Ely factory, Mr Bill Hatley, reminded the corporations national planning controller, Mr H N Brinton, that this year's longer campaign was costing farmers money.

The county Roots Committee chairman, Mr Peter Marr, of Melbourn, also complained that farmers were losing all round, as the beet deteriorated over a longer campaign.

"We ought to speed up the campaign," he urged. "Is it possible to speed up the drive for a new factory? The present situation is detrimental to all of us."

Mr Brinton accepted that a shorter campaign was desirable. "This year, it is going on far too long," he agreed.

"Now that we have got a little extra money, we are spending ten and a half million pounds on increased factory capacity throughout the country. We want to be able to avoid having loads come in on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, but larger facilities are extremely expensive, and it is a question of time and money."

He admitted that there had been breakdowns at Ely, but money was being made available to rectify the situation, and generally to provide better facilities within the present financial constraints.

The school principal, Mr Ken Benfield, suggested the corporation are failing to communicate with growers, who wanted to see a quicker investment of money. At present, there was "a lack of fervour" to grow more beet, and he was sure that there would be 100 percent co-operation from farmers, if they could know more about the investment taking place.

At present it appeared that the corporation was just keeping up with maintenance and inflation.

Mr Brinton acknowledged there could be a lack of communication, but the corporation were reluctant to publish their intentions until they knew a little more firmly what was going to happen under the European Economic Community and world schemes still being discussed.

## High Beet Yield Hopes Dashed.

About 5 percent of sugar beet grown in the area, served by the Ely beet factory, is still in the ground, estimates the agriculturist Mr Desmond Bradford.

About 70 percent of the crop has been delivered and the remainder is awaiting transport.

Early hopes that the sugar content would be high this year were dashed by rain and frost damage at the critical times. This is now averaging out at 15.74 percent, well below the five-year average of just under 16 percent.

The campaign, though, is expected to go on longer than usual, and finish in mid-February, with the slicing of more than 440,000 tons of beet, from the 32,000 acres of contract crops in Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, Huntingdon, Bedford, Norfolk and West Suffolk.

There have been a few delays due to the token pay-stoppage at the beginning of the campaign, –a hold up from a burst water main, and a bomb scare in November. But the factory has made-up for lost time, by twice breaking its daily slice record, with totals of 4,643 tons and then 4,713 tons. The average slice has been 3,800 tons.

Mr W Hatley, the Cambridgeshire Farmers Union representative for the Ely factory, said that the amount of beet taken into the factory on Boxing Day was the highest since 1968, and deliveries over the Christmas period had been good. The throughput had been slower, but the tonnage was less than estimated.

The chairman of the County Roots Committee, Mr Peter Marr, warned that in future, hauliers were not going to keep up supplies in the face of rocketing costs.

Beet was being delivered at present, because growers and hauliers were anxious to get rid of the crop, and not have it left “hanging round their necks.”

“The high cost of deliveries was becoming a serious matter, which hauliers and the British Sugar Corporation cannot ignore any longer.”

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Sugar HQ Moves Out.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, January the 22nd, 1974.

Headquarters of the British Sugar Corporation, –which buys the whole of this country's sugar beet crop, – have been moved to the heart of the largest beet growing area.

The new £600,000 Central offices have been built at Peterborough, as an extension to offices at the corporation's factory there.

Combined staff at Peterborough is now 300.

The headquarters were moved from offices in London's Piccadilly yesterday.

“The move will help us to increase our efficiency in many ways, including relations with the 20,000 farmers under contract to send sugar beet to our factories, " said Mr Kenneth Sinclair, chief executive director, yesterday.

Advantage.

“Now that Britain is in the Common Market, there are many changes taking place and pending in the sugar beet industry, and it will be a great advantage to have all our operations directed from the heart of our beet growing areas.”

The corporation's sales department, –responsible for marketing its well-known "Silver Spoon" White sugar, –will remain in London.

During recent years, British farmers have been restricted to growing sugar beet on some 443,000 acres to reduce competition with imported cane sugar. This year the acreage is being increased to 488,000.

The Government has stated that it intends to press hard in Brussels for an increased sugar beet quota for British farmers from 1975.

5,300 employees.

The corporation, which has an annual turnover of around £96 million, employs an average 5,300 in its various departments and factories throughout the year, and pays about eleven million pounds in salaries and wages a year. Its local factories are at Lynn, Wissington and Ely.

By 1975, it will have spent £45 million on development in five years. It is increasing factory capacity, replacing plant and machinery, and it plans to convert two remaining raw sugar factories to produce refined white sugar.

The Corporation cooperates with farmers in developing the sugar beet industry by agricultural advisory and educational work, and conducts a continuing programme of research into plant breeding, mechanisation and the use of fertilisers and herbicides.

"We are proud of our sugar beet industry with British farmers producing first class white sugar for British homes," said Mr Sinclair.

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Lime Waste.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, June the 12th, 1974.

An advertisement as it appeared in the newspaper, plus (explanations of abbreviations.)

Text reads:

British Sugar Corporation. Factory Waste Lime.

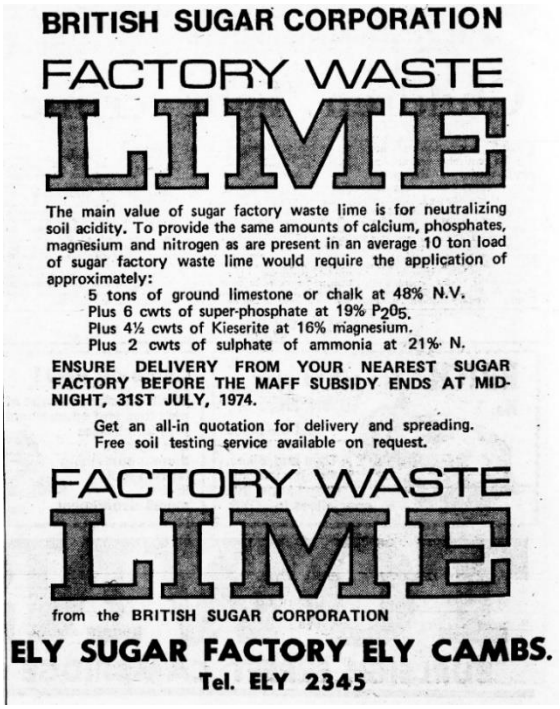
The main value of sugar factory waste lime is for neutralising soil acidity. To provide the same amounts of calcium, phosphates, magnesium and nitrogen as are present in an average ten-ton load of sugar factory waste lime, would require the application of approximately:

5 tons of ground limestone or chalk at 48% N.V. (called the 'Neutralising Value').

Plus, six-hundredweights of super-phosphate at 19%, P205. (P2O5 fertilizer is used to provide phosphorus to plants.

Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plant growth, and it is involved in a number of important plant processes, such as photosynthesis, energy.)

Plus, four and a half hundredweight of Kieserite at 16% magnesium.


BRITISH SUGAR CORPORATION
FACTORY WASTE
LIME
The main value of sugar factory waste lime is for neutralizing soil acidity. To provide the same amounts of calcium, phosphates, magnesium and nitrogen as are present in an average 10 ton load of sugar factory waste lime would require the application of approximately:
5 tons of ground limestone or chalk at 48% N.V.
Plus 6 cwts of super-phosphate at 19% P2O5.
Plus 4½ cwts of Kieserite at 16% magnesium.
Plus 2 cwts of sulphate of ammonia at 21% N.
ENSURE DELIVERY FROM YOUR NEAREST SUGAR FACTORY BEFORE THE MAFF SUBSIDY ENDS AT MIDNIGHT, 31ST JULY, 1974.
Get an all-in quotation for delivery and spreading.
Free soil testing service available on request.
FACTORY WASTE
LIME
from the BRITISH SUGAR CORPORATION
ELY SUGAR FACTORY ELY CAMBS.
Tel. ELY 2345

Plus, two hundredweights of sulphate of ammonia at 21% Nitrogen.

Ensure delivery from your nearest sugar factory before the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, (MAFF), subsidy ends at midnight on the 31st of July, 1974.

Get an all-in quotation for delivery and spreading.

Free soil testing service available on request.

Ely Sugar Factory, Ely, Cambs. Telephone Ely, 2345.

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Peart Faces Sugar Quiz.

The Liverpool Echo, Tuesday, July the 23rd, 1974.

The unofficial “rationing” of sugar by shops all over Britain, to a 2-pound bag per customer, is to be raised in the Commons.

Agriculture Minister, Mr Fred Peart, is to be asked to explain the growing shortage by Mr Edward Taylor, Conservative MP for Glasgow Cathcart.

A British Sugar Corporation spokesman said today: “We have adequate stocks to take us through to the autumn when we start to process this year's harvest.”

He thought the shortage was made worse by an, “element of panic.”

A huge black market in sugar is taking place, Mr Clement Freud, Liberal MP, for the Isle of Ely, said at a Liverpool meeting.

Mr Freud said that sugar was being rationed in the February ratios, so that places such as holiday towns, where the demand for sugar is much greater in the summer months, are facing a big shortage, and so a huge “black market" has grown up.

He said that in a few weeks’ time, Britain may have to subsidise higher priced sugar to the tune of £50 million.

His allegations caused some surprise in official circles.

Neither the Agriculture Ministry, nor the Prices and Consumer Protection Ministry spokesman said they had heard of under-the-counter sugar, and were trying to even out supplies.

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Little Hope of Beet Crop Easing the Sugar Crisis.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, August the 29th, 1974.

By our agricultural correspondent, David Waterson:

There is little hope of the sugar crisis being eased by the beet crop. The 1,500 growers who send their consignments to the British Sugar Corporation factory at Ely, have been badly hit by disease and drought troubles, in one of the worst seasons for many years.

It has been hoped that production would be stepped up by 10 percent, through increasing the national acreage from 460,000 to 488,000.

Instead, the increased acreage has been more than offset by disease. Although the British Sugar Corporation are remaining tight-lipped, yields will be down, it is thought, to the 12 to 14 tons an acre mark, compared with last year's figure of nearly 16 tons.

The agricultural manager at Ely, Mr Desmond Bradford, admitted their area had been badly hit by disease, particularly a yellow virus outbreak, which he thinks will have a serious impact.

Contracted.

No dates have been decided for the beet campaign, but he expects the £4 million mid- Anglian crop will not take as long as usual to handle.

The factory's 49th campaign will see more than 300 employees working round the clock for about 16 weeks, two weeks less than the usual campaign because of the lighter yields.

“The prospects for the crop do not look very bright at all,” he said. “The virus difficulties have been widespread.”

About 33,000 acres of beet have been contracted through the factory, on farms in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and West Suffolk.

Another British Sugar Corporation spokesman thought the crop would fall short of the 7,309,559 tons of last year, which was the second highest on record.

Rainfall.

The difficulties with the crop have included poor germination, which resulted in a shortfall of 20,000 acres in the national crop, 2,000 of them in mid-Anglia.

Then the process of the crop was hampered by the drought, by disease damage, after sprays failed to work owing to the weather and poor development.

Since then, the rainfall has given a late boost to the crop, but for many farmers it came too late to save the situation.

About 500,000 tons of beet will be processed at Ely, coming in at a daily rate of 500 loads a day.

Some forecasters are predicting yields of about 10 percent sugar content, which would be among the lowest in the area for many years. The Ely campaign is expected to start at the end of September.

## Fine Fare.

Fine Fare supermarket managers have been forbidden by their head office from speaking on the telephone about the availability of sugar in their stores.

The manager of one Fine Fare store in central Cambridge, said this was because of rival firms, ringing up to find out how much sugar, their rivals had managed to get in.

The prohibition extended to the Press, he said, although he was willing to discuss the situation with reporters personally.

A spokesman for Fine Fare's buying department at Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, said there was nothing sinister in the ban.

All the producers and main supermarket chains were "playing the game absolutely straight" during the shortage, he said. There was a restriction at all times on managers speaking to the newspapers, and Fine Fare were only safeguarding their interests, by not revealing how they were situated.

## Ban on Children After Sugar Rationing Rackets.

Children on their own are banned from buying sugar in one supermarket in mid-Anglia because the manager says they are running a high-price black market. Others have taken similar action, because mothers are sending in their children to beat the 2 lbs-a-family rationing by shops.

In all towns in the Cambridge area, the story of the sugar stampede is the same: as soon as it appears in the shops, it is snapped up.

It is becoming clear also that sales of artificial sweeteners have doubled, –and in some places they are in as short supply as sugar.

The supermarket where children on their own have been banned from buying sugar is Lipton's, in High Street, Huntingdon.

The manager, Mr. John Fareham said: "It's incredible what the kids will get up to these days. I have been told they have been coming in, buying sugar and then selling it at a profit."

"We have stopped serving children on their own. Also, the parents have been sending them in on their own, and then coming in themselves and getting another ration."

Mr Fareham said they were getting about 80 percent of their normal supply. He was putting the sugar on the shelves at different times each day to avoid a rush.

"Even the staff don't know today. That way it's a lot fairer, and we don't have squabbles."

At Keymarkets in Huntingdon, staff were operating a 2lb ration, and were only putting out part of their stock each day.

“When that's gone, it's gone, " said the manager. It's first come, first served. If people stuck to their ordinary weekly amount, it would be alright, but they are not.

The manager of Tesco, Mr T H Cooper, said his staff had not noticed any racket involving children, but “there seemed to be quite a few kids buying sugar.”

“What can we do about it if they are doing this? If the kids come in and pay their money, we can't stop them.”

The manager of Civil's supermarket in Saint Ives, Mr Thomas Henderson, said they were receiving their normal supplies, but were having to ration to make sure a steady flow was kept.

“If we could get more than we are getting, I would think we could sell double a day, " he said. “It's like the gold rush. As soon as it's out on the shelves, it's gone.”

Not arrived.

White sugar was not available at most Cambridge supermarkets yesterday, but one major trader had adequate sugar and no artificial sweeteners.

Arbury Discount had enough sugar for every customer to be allowed one two-pound bag from Monday to Wednesday, and two bags for the rest of the week. The price was eleven and a half pence.

The manager said the firm had been lucky, in that sugar was allocated on the basis of past sales, and Arbury Discount were still getting six tons per week from the British Sugar Corporation. But the shop was “right out” of artificial sweeteners, which have been snapped up in the first spate of panic buying.

At Sainsbury's, there was only soft brown sugar at ten pence a pound. The manager said white sugar normally came in on Mondays, but had not arrived because of the Bank Holiday. He was hoping for more to sell at twelve and a half pence later this week.

International stores on Market Hill had no sugar at all, except for a small amount of demerara at ten pence a pound. When white sugar came in, said the manager, Mr Philip Hall, supplies rationed to one bag per customer were usually sold within a few hours.

The Co-op had only Danish sugar at twenty pence a kilo bag, (just over 2 lbs), but said they were hoping for bulk supplies of Government relief sugar to arrive within the next ten days

Customers swooped on all 1,400 packets of sugar in only two hours at Ely's Tesco store yesterday.

The two-pound packets were limited to one a customer. “Everyone is buying whether they want it or not, said the manager, Mr. John Willson.

“People bring their children to go out armed with a packet each, what can you do?”

Mr. Willson said the store were receiving about two-thirds of their normal supply, yet demand must have increased about a thousand percent.

“By the end of the year, there will be so many shortages that manager’s lives will be hell. First it was toilet rolls, now it's sugar. We are all going to end up nervous wrecks.”

“And the customers are so insulting. I can understand them being up-tight. But it is not my fault. What do they say to me? It's unrepeatable.”

Mr. Willson said people were now going for artificial sweeteners, and sales of these had probably doubled.

A check on five High Street grocers in Saint Neots yesterday, revealed that though sugar supplies were still short, a regular pattern was emerging.

Lipton’s, the Co-op, Dudeney and Johnston, and International, are all receiving stocks towards the end of the week and selling out by the weekend. This means there is virtually no sugar on the shelves from Monday to Wednesday, though by very strict rationing, Dudeney and Johnstons had seven bags left on sale yesterday.

Store managers say supplies are smaller and selling faster than before, but they are managing to spin out stocks by putting a limited amount on sale each day.

Woolworths have had no sugar for about three weeks, and do not know when to expect their next delivery, said the manager.

Delivery.

Two of Royston's three supermarkets were out of sugar yesterday, but there is still a plentiful supply of artificial sweeteners in local chemists.

A spokesman for Russell's Chemist shop in Royston's High Street, reported a slight increase in the sale of artificial sweeteners, but added that the demand was not yet biting hard.

“The increase has only just become noticeable. We have had a few more inquiries for artificial sweeteners, but most people still seem to be getting their sugar from somewhere,” he said.

On Tuesday they weren't getting it from Royston's International supermarket. The store had their last delivery of 560 two-pound bags on Friday, and by Saturday it had all been sold.

The manager, Mr G E Howes said: “We are rationing each customer to one, two-pound bag. We won't sell sugar to children, as some mothers are sending in their children after they have had their ration.”

The manager of Lipton’s supermarket, Mr C Pegram, is also operating a rationing system, but yesterday he too didn't have any sugar to ration. He had a delivery of 840 pounds last week, and the whole lot was sold within a day.

Sugar was, however, available at the Co-op. A spokesman said they had been better placed than most other retailers, owing to their import of Danish sugar.

The manager of the international stores in Newmarket High Street said yesterday, he had not received his weeks allocation of sugar and that the supermarket had no artificial sweetener left.

He said that when the sugar did arrive, “it will be the same amount as last week and the same prices last week. I have not heard anything different. As far as I know it is still eleven and a half pence.”

The manager of Lipton’s, Mr L Barber, said there would be no price increases. “We are getting our allocation. We are just as we were before.”

Mr Barber said sales of artificial sweeteners had gone up 50 percent.

Cheap sugar supplies are exhausted at Haverhill. The Co-op have supplies of imported Danish sugar at twenty pence a kilo, but the other three major supermarkets do not expect supplies of sugar until later this week.

The supplies, when they do arrive, vary in price. Budgen expected to charge eleven and a half pence, Fine Fare, twelve pence, and International twelve and a half pence, all for two-pound bags of British sugar. All shops expect to have to limit supplies to about two pounds per customer, unless deliveries are larger than previous weeks.

The Co-op in Saffron Walden are receiving a fairly steady supply of sugar. Last week imported Danish sugar was available at twenty pence a kilo, and yesterday British Sugar Corporation sugar was being offered for sale at twelve and a half pence for a two-pound bag. Customers, however, are still being limited to two pounds each, and the supply was going down fast.

Other shops have not been so fortunate. International stores had sold out of sugar, and the manager said he saw no sign of improvement in the near future. Budgen were also sold out, “We are getting our normal supplies but it's being snapped up as fast as it goes on the shelves, " said the manager, Mr R G Wilkinson.

But he was expecting to receive a stock of bulk sugar shortly, which would be packed into paper bags by the supermarket staff. “Until my head office instructs me otherwise, this will be sold at her normal price of eleven and a half pence for two-pounds,” he said.

A spokesman for Boots said sales of artificial sweeteners had rocketed since the start of the sugar shortage. “We are selling out almost as fast as we get stocks in. Sales, I would guess, have quadrupled, and we could sell more if we were not limited in our supplies.”

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Ely Beet Campaign Likely to be the Shortest on Record.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, September the 4th, 1974.

One of the shortest campaigns on record is being forecast for the Ely Beet Sugar factory. It is only likely to run 12 weeks instead of the usual 17 or 18, and it is reckoned that yields will be down to 10-11 tons per acre throughout the factory area.

Cambridgeshire Farmers Union executive were told last night that the yields and the sugar content were particularly low, and that the factory expected to finish its 49th campaign before Christmas.

About 1,500 growers with about 30,000 acres of beet, send it to Ely from the Cambridgeshire area.

The growers gave a cool reception to proposals which are likely to bring them rises of 20 percent on their present contracts, following months of pressure for a better deal from the British Sugar Corporation and the Government.

The arrangements, which have been negotiated by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Fred Peart, in Brussels, will bring growers an improvement of more than £2 a ton on the expected £7.65 a ton for their crops.

The final payments growers will receive, will depend on a number of subsidy allowances, but the county representative on the National Farmers Union Sugar beet Committee in London, Mr E R Fordham, described the offer as “very encouraging and very substantial.”

There are also prospects of growers doing much better on the 1975 crop.

Despite this, the chairman of the county sugar Beet committee, Mr Peter Marr, urged that members should not be “carried away.”

He calculated that the increases would be about £1.50 on last year's crop, which still didn't mean growers would have a great deal of cash at the bank, that wasn't already spoken for.

He pointed out the failure to allow for transport increases, which would surely be forthcoming on the 1975 crop.

“We must still keep the pressure on headquarters, on the British Sugar Corporation, on Government and on the EEC Council of Ministers, in view of the world price of sugar today, and the present position on shortages, " he added.

Mr M Funston, (Great Shelford), thought they still had a long way to go to cover the increased costs of the crop, and Mr H K Kitchener, (Shepreth), maintained the beet was still “about the worst job on the farm.”

Mr E Bullaman, a Girton pig farmer, gave the meeting a different slant. “If someone offered me an extra 20 percent for my pigs, I should say thank you very much,” he declared.

The chairman, Mr J M Botting, insisted the growers should not be churlish and that they were getting a lot more than was expected even a week ago.

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BSC Aim to Cut Sugar Campaign.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, September the 26th, 1974.

The Chief Executive of the British Sugar Corporation last week talked about plans to reduce the length of the beet sugar campaign at Ely and other British Sugar Corporation centres, after the opening of a £250,000 office complex and canteen at the Ely factory.

The Chief Executive, Mr Kenneth Sinclair, said: “We have a long-term programme costing £35 million.”

The money would be spent on increasing efficiency and output capacity at British Sugar Corporation factories. But the third aim of the planning programme, was to reduce the length of the campaign; (this year's is a short campaign).

“The campaign will be shorter in the years to come. I think the optimum we would like to bring it down to is 115 days, regardless of how good the yield, which is poor this year.”

Mr Sinclair said he thought there was a very” serious threat” of farmers turning to other crops if the price for beet was not increased.

There was a shortage of sugar in this country because of the “defection” of some Commonwealth countries, attracted by the high world price. This shortage had been exacerbated by many people hoarding sugar.

The new complex was opened by the MP for the Isle of Ely, Mr Clement Freud.

Photograph and caption below.

Caption reads: The Isle of Ely MP, Mr. Clement Freud, inspects the canteen after opening the block at Ely Sugar factory.

**The Isle of Ely MP, Mr. Clement Freud, inspects the canteen after opening the new block at Ely sugar factory.**

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Ely Sugar Factory Shuts Down.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, October the 8th, 1974.

The heavy rain of the last few days has forced Ely Sugar Factory to close, only a week after the start of the campaign.

A spokesman for the British Sugar Corporation at Peterborough said it was the first time bad weather had halted production at the Ely factory.

The Ely agriculturist, Mr Desmond Bradford, said he expected production to start again in a week's time if the weather improves.

If the rain does not ease off, then it could be even longer before production resumes.

Mr Bradford added: “It costs money to restart machinery. I would think the cost of stopping production could easily be several thousand pounds.

Slicing at the factory stopped yesterday afternoon. the Peterborough spokesman said. Everyone would be kept on the payroll, and some people would be put on other jobs.

The factory is at a standstill, he added, because the bad weather had had a dramatic effect on the harvesting of the sugar beet crop.

Beet that has been harvested and would have gone to Ely, is now being re-routed to the British Sugar Corporation factory at Wissington in Norfolk. Wissington, unlike Ely, produces white sugar which is urgently needed to meet the country's current sugar shortage.

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Slow Start to Ely Sugar Beet Campaign.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, October the 10th, 1974.

Poor weather conditions are delaying the sugar beet campaign. But despite the hold-up in harvesting the crop, the Ely beet sugar factory agriculturist, Mr Desmond Bradford, expected the campaign to be in full swing by the end of last week.

Mr Bradford emphatically denied reports that slicing had been seriously affected by the non-appearance of beet lorries, stressing that they had dealt with 100 lorries on the first day, and 200 on the second, since the campaign began on Monday.

“Undoubtedly the crop is lighter than usual, and a start has not been as brisk, but we are still getting enough beet to work steadily on, " he said.

**Mr. Bradford: “Undoubtedly the crop is lighter than usual.”**

Early indications are that the sugar content is above what was expected at 14.9 percent. Although this is well below the usual 16 percent mark, this is a great achievement on forecasts, which suggested that content would be about 11 percent.

Despite this, the crop is still the lightest for several generations, and some farmers are calling it a disaster.

Mr Bradford explained that the wet weather had upset farmers' plans, and caused a chain reaction of delays with potatoes, and in clearing up after the cereals harvest.

It is still believed, however, that the campaign will be the shortest on recent record, with the whole operation being completed before Christmas, instead of mid-January.

Adjacent is a photograph of Mr Desmond Bradford.

***

Ely Beet Factory Nears Target.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, October the 22nd, 1974.

Production at the Ely Beet Sugar factory is fast approaching the factory's target of about 4,000 tons a day.

A spokesman said today: "The sugar content is 15.20 percent and compares quite favourably with the same period of last year.

On October the 13th of last year it was 15.52percent.

This year's content is not bad at all. It is better than we expected after the virus attack in mid-season. We would have expected a low content because of this."

Tribute.

The crop is an estimated 30 percent down this year. The factory had to close for 10 days until last Thursday, because weather conditions prevented farmers from harvesting their crops.

The beet was now coming into the factory in "reasonable" quantities. Earlier, the factory's agriculturalist, Mr Desmond Bradford paid tribute to the farmers.

"It is surprising what an extremely good job they have done under all the conditions, " he said. "There is no doubt that the farmers have had an appalling start to the campaign."

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Sugar Stocks Improve as Peart Tries Again.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, October the 22nd, 1974.

As Common Market farm Ministers argue about the cost of Britain's sugar next year, supplies in the shops seem to be slightly better than for some months.

A Sugar Bureau spokesman said the position had improved but was still not easy. "There is no point in glossing over the situation," he said.

"There are still difficulties, particularly for working women who have not the time to shop around."

Every effort was being made to sustain supplies, and all sugar companies were producing the maximum output possible, he said.

"Every single packet of sugar they produce is going to the shops, –and we know that the retail trade is doing all it can to share the sugar out as fairly as possible," but prospects for next year are still in the balance.

Mr. Peart

The European Economic Community proposal to supply sugar bought on the world market, –with prices now more than £400 a ton, –on a subsidised basis for Britain, at around £130 a ton, is being held up by West German anxiety over the cost.

If the deal does not go through, the Agriculture Minister, Mr Fred Peart, will have to buy Australian sugar.

This would cost about £180 a ton after freight and refining charges, –a lot cheaper than world prices. But the deal would put Britain in breach of Common Market treaties.

Adjacent, is a photograph of Mr. Fred Peart.

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Weather Delays Beet Harvest.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, October the 30th, 1974.

The sugar beet processing plant at Ely may have to stay open until after Christmas, because the harvest has been so slow.

Members of the Cambridgeshire branch of the National Farmers Union, heard at their executive committee meeting last night that it was originally hoped that the plant could close at Christmas, but the wet weather had delayed harvesting.

Mr W M Hatley, told the meeting: “The factory is not doing very much. It's a pretty dismal place at the moment.”

A similar situation was reported at the Felsted beet factory.

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Sugar Crisis: Mid-Anglia May be Lucky.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, November the 7th, 1974.

Mid-Anglia should escape much of the effect of the new sugar famine which has hit London and the South-East.

The shortage is caused by a worker's blockade on supplies from Tate and Lyle's London refinery.

The reason Mid-Anglia may escape the worst effects, is that most of the large stores in the region get their sugar from the British Sugar Corporation, whose supplies have not been affected.

The Co-op, Budgens, Sainsbury and most of the Fine Fare stores are supplied with British Sugar Corporation Sugar, and should continue to receive deliveries.

But a few Fine Fare stores, and all the Tesco shops in the area are supplied by Tate and Lyle, and they will be affected almost immediately.

A spokesman for the Cambridge Co-op said that provided the British Sugar Corporation did not try to spread their deliveries more evenly across the country, they would not be affected by the strike.

Hardship.

But at Tesco's, the manager of the Cambridge Regent Street branch, said they and other branches were supplied by Tate and Lyle.

“We can't get any at the moment. We have none in stock or very little and will probably keep that for the weekend.”

Tate and Lyle said on Tuesday they would not be able to supply the South and Midlands “for the time being”, and were halting sugar deliveries to the areas.

The refinery workers are protesting about the Common Market sugar agreement, which they fear will mean 1,000 process workers losing their jobs.

However, the workers allowed emergency supplies to be released today for drug manufacturers and old people's homes.

An action committee spokesman said: “We have no objection to providing supplies for cases of genuine hardship.”

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Beet Haul Delayed.

The Cambridge Evening News, Saturday, November the 16th, 1974.

More than 50 percent of beet in the heavier soils still remains to be harvested, the agriculturist at Ely Beet Sugar factory, Mr Desmond Bradford, said yesterday.

“This is quite a lot for the time of year, and can be put down to the appalling harvesting conditions being experienced, " he commented.

Most of the beet being processed at the Ely factory has been harvested from the lighter fen soil, but farmers in south and west Cambridgeshire are having great difficulties in getting the crop in.

“Despite this, we are now dealing with up to 400 loads a day, which is nearly up to the average for this time of the season.

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Boost for Ely Beet Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, November the 19th, 1974.

Ely Beet Sugar Factory received a small boost today with the news that the British Sugar Corporation's plant at Felstead, Essex, is closing today through lack of beet.

Beet that would have normally been processed at Felstead will now go to Ely, Ipswich or Bury Saint Edmunds.

The agriculturist at Ely, Mr Desmond Bradford, said it would help his factory to a marginal extent, and might extend the length of the campaign.

But he pointed out that yesterday's rain had not helped. The factory was still running at below capacity.

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Sugar Factory Odd One Out.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, November the 19th, 1974.

Peterborough Sugar Factory has become the "odd one out" as a result of the decision of the Environment Minister, Mr Anthony Crossland to veto the construction of three 180 feet tall silos on the site.

With the exception of Peterborough and Ely, all factories of the British Sugar Corporation have silos, and thus the means to produce white sugar in a 'straight through' process.

Planning permission has now been granted for the construction of two silos at the Ely factory, –silos that are bigger in diameter and of similar height to those proposed at Peterborough.

The civic-conscious Cathedral City of Ely, has obviously seen no great damage to its environment by the construction of the silos.

Admittedly, the Ely factory is not as centrally placed as the one at Peterborough, but the flat landscape of the Fens will tend to accentuate the intrusion into the skyline.

What must be remembered is that the decision of the Minister does not mean that there will be no silos at Peterborough.

Mr Crossland has confined his opposition to the three particular silos which were the subject of a public inquiry in the city in January.

He has left it open to the British Sugar Corporation to formulate an alternative plan.

Apart from all other many considerations, the Minister's action means that there will be further delay in Peterborough catching up with other factories.

Any of the alternatives open to the British Sugar Corporation, will, on today's estimates, cost more money. And inflation could mean that the enforced delay will prove very costly indeed. Why is it so necessary for silos to be provided at Peterborough? I spoke to Mr Tom Rogers, production director of the British Sugar Corporation.

It was, he told me, primarily a financial matter. It is less costly to make white sugar in the ‘straight through' process, than producing raw sugar which has to be refined later. This cheaper method of producing sugar was vital to the interests of the country and every housewife, he declared.

Mr Rogers confirmed that the British Sugar Corporation will now be looking at the alternatives, with a view to submitting another scheme for approval. There was, he explained, more to it than merely erecting silos. The whole matter had to be considered in relation to the general layout of the factory.

The building of silos would be carried out alongside other reconstruction work in the factory and, of course, none of that work could commence until the silos were approved. This setback to the plans for the Peterborough factory has come at a time when the British sugar industry is poised to take advantage of the extra quota being put into operation next year.

There have been favourable reactions to the contract issued by the British Sugar Corporation, and it seems likely that there will be a big increase in the acreage taken for the sugar beet crop.

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Off-Beet Sugar Year.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, November the 20th, 1974.

Rodney Tibbs, inquiring how pure white sugar is extracted from grimy sugar beet, found everyone at the Ely factory complaining about the worst sugar processing season ever.

While lorries load up with tons of sugar outside the window, and the management of the Ely Beet Sugar factory talk gloomily of a sugar shortage, down in the works canteen, they have to get their sugar elsewhere.

This topsy-turvy situation at the huge works of the British Sugar Corporation seems to summarise the worldwide sugar muddle at the moment.

I went to the Ely factory to find out how something as pure and as white as sugar, is extracted from such a repulsively grimy vegetable as sugar beet, and found everyone complaining that this is the worst sugar beet processing season ever.

Normally 500 lorries a day queue in the long drive up to the factory, waiting for beet to be sampled, checked, categorised and passed to the enormous works.

At the moment only about 300 a day, and the input of beet has fallen from 4,000 tons to about 3,500 tons a day.

From a single sugar beet weighing, say 500 grams, 80 grams of sugar is eventually extracted. Some is returned to the remaining beet pulp in the form of molasses and goes out of another door at the factory as a highly nutritious animal feed.

The British Sugar Corporation’s work at Ely produces sugar which is not totally refined. It comes off the jiggling conveyor systems in quantities that would make the housewife drool, but the colour is a light golden brown.

At this stage it is quite palatable and safe to eat, but before a two-pound bag carries its Silver Spoon label or its Tate and Lyle and Mr Cube, it is processed elsewhere one stage further to make it whiter than white.

There seems to be a friendly arrangement between refiners and producers. When I visited the factory, two tankers from the rival Tate and Lyle company were loading up with the product, which seems to be golden in every sense of the word.

The interior of the Ely factory is so large and contains such huge items of equipment, that during the non-producing summer season, when overhauls are carried out, resembles a cathedral, and never gets warm inside, even in a heatwave.

From the end of September to the end of January, however, the factory is transformed. On layers of steel-mesh floor, men move amidst clouds of steam.

The hot red glow of fires reflects from furnace doors, the air is rancid with a penetrating bitter-sweet aroma, and the atmosphere vibrates to the clatter and roar of motors and conveyor belts.

The incoming sugar beet is reduced to a pulp in banks of slicing machines, and then passes to a 600-ton cylinder in which a similar process to that of making a cup of tea takes place.

Hot water is passed through the pulp to make an infusion, and the sugar rich water is subsequently purified and boiled away under a vacuum to leave a viscous, brown, granular lava which flows into centrifuges.

The next step is to pass water through the sugar at high speed. Each process produces sugar of a lighter colour.

Why doesn't the sugar just dissolve and wash away in the water? The man in charge didn't know. “Funny, isn't it,” he said. “You'd think it would, but it doesn't.”

With the light brown sugar pouring from chutes into road tankers, the Ely factory completes its responsibility.

Next year it might go on to complete the refining process, but in the meantime, it sends off brown sugar and get in white for the canteen from other British Sugar Corporation factories.

Members of the staff are allowed two pounds of white sugar from other factories.

Appallingly wet weather and a severe attack of virus disease, have depleted this year's crop, and the sugar producing season is likely to be short.

The British Sugar Corporation men stand by the Hoppers, discharging hundreds of tons of sugar, and complain of the shortage.

However, to the housewife, their world is a sweet, golden, paradise.

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Lost Bonus Talks at Beet Factory.

Union official in ‘salvage’ bid.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, November the 28th, 1974.

A union official was meeting the management of the Ely Sugar Beet Factory today, in a bid to salvage some of the losses in bonus that have hit process workers, following the factory's closure at the weekend because of a lack of beet.

The district organiser of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, Mr George Parker, said: “Most of the men will be losing between £400 and £500.”

“They have budgeted for bonuses of at least £20 a week in overtime.”

Some men would leave the factory if there was no compensation offer for the workers. If they did, there was a danger of the factory becoming short of skilled workers next year.

Most of the men were specialists.

Mr. Parker said his union represented most of the process workers at the factory. “It is a tragedy all round. The men are going to have a dismal Christmas,” he said.

“And by next spring, the housewife will be feeling the effect of the weather on the harvesting of the beet and potato crops.”

Mr. Parker did not know if the management was going to make the men an offer at today's meeting. Some of the men might be transferred to other British Sugar Corporation factories.

A spokesman for the British Sugar Corporation at Peterborough said yesterday: “The management is formulating plans, which it will put to the employees, to help offset the loss of earnings.

“No permanent staff would be laid off. The men will be left to carry out their normal off-season duties,” he added.

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Army Help Sought for Beet Pulling.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, November the 29th, 1974.

With several thousand acres of sugar beet at risk in West Norfolk and Fenland, –and more in other areas, –the British Sugar Corporation is seeking Army help with the harvest.

The local crop in jeopardy is on the Marshland silt and Fenland soils, saturated by persistent rain for several months. Harvesters have got bogged down, and some farmers have even gone back to pulling and topping by hand.

The British Sugar Corporation this week sent a letter to the Agriculture Minister, Mr Fred Peart, stating that because of the exceptionally wet weather, many farmers on heavy soils were in great difficulty with harvesting.

This follows the move by Clenchwarton farmer, Mr Robin Kerkham, county vice-chairman of Norfolk branch of the National Farmers Union, urging his union to seek Army help with the potato harvest.

The British Sugar Corporation says: “The army would be able to help in hand pulling beet, and with tracked vehicles, in transporting the sugar beet from the fields, as well as towing out farmers harvesters that became bogged down.

Frost danger.

The Corporation's Peterborough-based agricultural director, Mr Oswald Rose, added: “Normally at this time of the year, 58 percent of the crop has been harvested, –but this year only 45 percent is in.

“Much of the sugar beet still to be harvested is on heavy land, and there is a danger that frost and snow will set in before farmers are able to lift it.”

Mr Arthur Dyer, agriculturist at Lynn sugar factory, said it was gratifying that the corporation had sought Army aid in one of the worst harvesting seasons ever.

Troops could be a great help in pulling a crop by hand, he said, but on some farms, conditions were so bad, Army vehicles could themselves become bogged down.

He estimated that some 4,000 acres in the Lynn area were at risk, mainly in the Marshland district. But many acres were on small farms where there was generally more labour available, –and throughout the district, there was the spirit to get the crop out, however bad the conditions.

Farmers praised.

He paid the farmers this compliment: “We have nothing but immense praise for the way farmers have stuck to the most difficult task of harvesting and delivering.”

“The relatively small amount of dirt arriving on the beet at the factory, reflects the great deal of care and attention which the farmer is taking, –and this is greatly appreciated.”

Mr Peter Dyke, agriculturist at Wissington Sugar factory, estimated that about 5 percent of his area’s beet was at risk, particularly if the wet weather continued, or frost set in.

He knew several farms where beet had been lifted by hand, but this was not possible on a large scale, because there were not the men working in agriculture now.

He said farmers might find it easier to pull a harvester with a cage wheel on the side of the tractor, outside the crop.

One of his colleagues, –factory agricultural development officer, Mr John Armstrong, –had devised two small attachments to the harvester, to help clean beet more thoroughly, and to keep weeds out of the drive mechanism.

Below capacity.

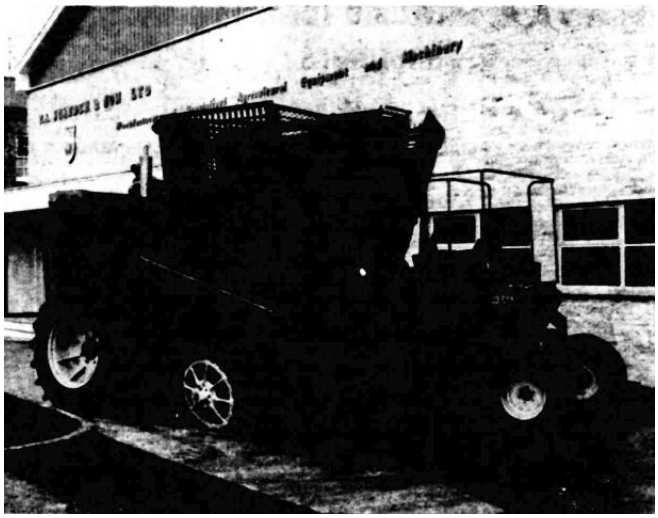
Both Lynn and Wissington factories have been working below full capacity, although with the help of loads diverted from Ely, (where the factory has closed for the season). Wissington is now back at full slice.

They have been accepting beet as it has been available, instead of the normal fairly strict system of allowing deliveries by permit only.

Yield in the Wissington area is now put at ten to eleven tons an acre, (fifteen and a half tons last year), at fifteen and a half percent sugar content, (fifteen percent last year). and in the Lynn area, twelve and a half tons an acre, (seventeen and a quarter ton last year), at 15.7 to 16 percent sugar content. Nationally, the sugar yield is put at 650,000 tons, --30 percent down on average.

Standen beet harvester,

Photograph and caption below: --The photograph is poor quality, but the caption reads:



It is ironical, that in one of the worst ever seasons for mechanical lifting of sugar beet, a Fenland firm has chosen to unveil its latest beet harvester. The new harvester, pictured outside the Ely premises of F A Standen and Sons, (Engineering), will be seen publicly for the first time next week at the Royal Smithfield show, at London's Earls Court exhibition hall. It is a self-propelled machine, harvesting two rows of beet simultaneously. The lifting wheels are mounted on a floating carriage, which with the aid of guide skids, centre the wheels on to the beet row, allowing for a two-inch deviation on either side. The harvester weighs six and a half tons, and has a three-ton holding tank which it is claimed, can be emptied in little over half a minute.

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Sugar Offer Defended.

The Irish Independent, Tuesday, December the 17th, 1974.

The European Economic Community Commission, claimed in Brussels yesterday, that its latest offer to 46 developing countries, –many of them sugar producers from the Commonwealth, now negotiating a trade deal with the Community, –goes far beyond the expiring Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. (The CSA).

Mr Claude Cheysson, of France, the Development Aid Commissioner, yesterday told a press conference that the Market’s offer implied better guarantees of secure outlets for their sugar.

He added that the system of minimum prices the European Economic Community is offering, is “better than anything ever offered by industrialised states to developing countries.”

He also said that the Market's offer implied for the buyers’ better guarantees, ensuring that the sugar suppliers could fulfil their contracts.

“While there are no real penalty clauses in the planned sugar protocol for failure to supply, the implied guarantees go far beyond those in the Commonwealth sugar agreement, " he said.

The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement nearly broke down this year, because supplier countries failed to fulfil their promises because of output shortfalls. They were also tempted to sell the sugar for much higher prices on world markets.

The Commonwealth Agreement, which expires on December the 31st, was traditionally ensuring sugar-cane supplies to British refineries. The Commonwealth sugar growers are mainly Caribbean and Latin American countries.

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Beet Factory to Close.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, January the 16th, 1975.

Farmers in the Newmarket area have been told that the British Sugar Corporations factory at Bury Saint Edmunds is closing.

The shutdown date is January the 23rd, –but this is flexible, and will depend on weather conditions and how much beet is left in the ground in the area, said the British Sugar Corporation spokesman.

At present, he added, good progress has been made in the region, and it is not expected that it will be necessary to extend the deadline.

The Ely factory closed before Christmas due to low crops and harvesting difficulties in the wet weather.

These crops were diverted to other factories, including Wissington in Norfolk, Kings Lynn, Peterborough and Bury Saint Edmunds.

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Blaze at Ely Beet Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, January the 27th, 1975.

The fire brigade was called to the beet sugar factory at Ely at the weekend, when a fire started in a 1,000-ton coal store.

But very little of the coal was burned. The works manager, Mr Thomas Lubienski, said that only about two hundredweight of coal had been burned.

He said the fire started in one of the huge heaps of coal stored outside the factory by spontaneous combustion. The alarm was raised after a night watchman spotted the fire.

Mr Lubienski added: “The coal was only burning on the surface. It is stacked too tightly for any air to get in further down.”

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## Concern Over Sugar Jobs.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, July the 8th, 1975.

Concern was expressed in the Commons on Thursday, about what effect the British Sugar Corporation's expansion in beet production would have on cane sugar workers in Merseyside, Glasgow and London.

During the Commons questions, Mr Eric Heffer, Labour MP for Walton, called on the Minister of Agriculture, to ensure that workers in those areas were given any extra beet production for refining, to keep their jobs in existence.

### Discussions.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture, Dr Gavin Strang, said the Government welcomed the British Sugar Corporation expansion programme, but attached the highest importance to workers in the refining industry.

There had been numerous discussions with representatives of refinery workers, and the Minister had the confidence of the workers.

In another reply, Doctor Strang said it was estimated that the total plantings of sugar beet for the 1975 to 76 harvest was 480,300 acres.

Mr Clement Freud, MP for the Isle of Ely, asked about the expected yield from the 1975 to 1976 crop. Doctor Strang said it was impossible to predict. There had been less planting this year because of difficult soil conditions.

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## Ely BSC Plant to be Improved.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, July the 24th, 1975.

Some improvements are to be made to the British Sugar Corporation's Ely factory as part of the company's recently announced £100 million expansion programme. Larger weigh bridges are to be installed on the site, together with more facilities for taking samples of beet as it arrives for processing.

The improvements are all part of the five-year programme designed to increase annual sugar production at British Sugar Corporation's 17 factories, from 950,000 to 1,250,000 tons in an average year, and to between 1,350,000, and 1,400,000 tons in above average years.

A spokesman at British Sugar Corporations Peterborough headquarters, said that the improvement work at Ely would be carried out towards the end of the five-year programme because it was not absolutely essential.

More expansion work, –equivalent to building 3 new factories, –will be carried out at Bury Saint Edmunds, Wissington, Cantley, Newark and York.

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Sugar Beet Forecast is Light.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, September the 18th, 1975.

Whatever happens with the weather, there is now little chance of a substantial improvement in the Mid-Anglia sugar beet crop, says the agriculturist at the Ely Beet Sugar factory, Mr Desmond Bradford.

The crop is light after surviving a long drought, and the only effect that belated rains can have, is to ease harvesting, at the expense of reducing the present excellent sugar content.

About 300,000 tons of beet are normally handled at the Ely factory, but the level is expected to be well down on the average. Mr Bradford commented, that the main imponderable at present, was when lifting the crop would start.

Originally the British Sugar Corporation at Peterborough forecast a crop of 800,000 to 850,000 tons of white sugar, and at one point were even hoping for 1,000,000 tons, in view of the extra acreage planted. Now it has reduced its estimates to 700,000 tons, against last year's disaster crop of 560,000 tons.

Mr Bradford emphasised that crops were extremely varied, depending on whether particular areas had experienced localised rain. There were some good crops next door to bad ones on neighbouring farms.

The British Sugar Corporation blamed continued drought in many parts of East Anglia for the lower forecasts. The earlier projection had been made from preliminary samples with the expectation of a break in the dry weather.

It was unlikely, Mr Bradford said, that better crops in the North would offset the poor performance in East Anglia, which is the main production area.

But the impact of the sugar shortfall may well not be as serious as appears at first sight, according to experts. Shops report ample supplies of sugar in view of the steep drop in demand created by higher prices, extensive hoarding by consumers last year, and shipments from the continent.

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Continued Availability of Soil.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, September the 24th, 1975.

FOLLOWING THE RECENT INTERRUPTION — BRITISH SUGAR CORPORATION — ELY WISH TO ANNOUNCE THE

CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF SOIL

FROM THEIR PONDS COMMENCING THURSDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER, 1975

BRITISH SUGAR CORPORATIN — ELY NR. ADELAIDE, ELY, CAMBS — Tel: 2345

The advertisement on the left appeared in the newspaper, and reads:

Following the recent interruption, – The British Sugar Corporation, – Ely, wish to announce the continued availability of soil from their ponds, commencing Thursday, the 25th of September, 1975.

British Sugar Corporation, –Ely, – Near Adelaide, Ely, Cambs. – Telephone: 2345.

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Ely Beet Factory Snag for Mid-Anglia Growers.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, September the 25th, 1975.

Nearly 2,000 mid-Anglian sugar beet growers will have to divert any early crops they harvest, to factories outside the region, because the Ely factory is not expected to open until mid or late October.

Most of the crops are locked in bone-hard ground, but those farmers who are able to start lifting will have to send beet either to Wissington in Norfolk or Bury Saint Edmunds.

Recent rain has helped to soften the conditions, but the British Sugar Corporation, based at Peterborough, claims it will be a slow-starting harvest for the 35,000 acres of contract crops, worth almost £4 million in mid Anglia.

Prolonged drought.

Because of this, only 10 of the Corporation's 17 factories are scheduled to start processing at the start of October, although the dates might be changed if the conditions improve.

Last year, the Ely factory was delayed by the heavy rain, and this year the situation has been reversed by the prolonged drought of the summer.

There were even hints at one stage last year that the Army might have to be called to the rescue to save sugar supplies, which had already been severely depleted by panics over a shortage, aggravated by poor yields from beet.

The Bury factory will start beet processing on October the 6th, and will be followed by the opening of Wissington, on October the 7th.

British Sugar says its opening plan is flexible, and that it will open the other factories if beet supplies build up.

Farmers have been told of the opening dates, and that the factories selected have been chosen because they are at the centre of the beet growing areas.

It is expected that because of the lower yields, the 50th campaign at Ely will last about the same time as last year, and could therefore be finished before Christmas.

This contrasts with previous years when the Ely factory started work in September and finished at the end of January, with more than 400 lorries bringing in up to 4,000 tons of beet a day for processing, by about 300 workers.

British Sugar has also announced that it foresees two gains for growers.

The next Common Market price review early in 1976, and the probability that the "green pound," –the rate of exchange at which Common Market prices are converted to sterling, -- both offer the prospect of a substantially increased income for sugar beet growers next year.

The corporation and the National Farmers Union have failed to reach agreement on terms with the main stumbling block involving allowances for sugar beet pulp, (additional income paid over the basic beet price for the pulp content of beet, which the corporation process and sell as animal feed.)

The present scale, the corporation says, is based on fuel and labour costs applying several years ago.
Since then, there have been substantial cost increases, resulting in further losses on the company's pulp account.

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BSC Accused of Endangering 1976 Crop.

The Fenland Citizen, Wednesday, October the 8th, 1975.

With the first loads of sugar beet from the West Norfolk crop arriving at Lynn and Wissington sugar factories next week, the British Sugar Corporation is being accused of endangering the 1976 crop.

Negotiations between the British Sugar Corporation and the National Farmers Union are reported to have broken down, with about £1 a ton separating the two sides, over the price farmers should receive for next year's beet.

West Norfolk farmer Mr Bill Perowne, chairman of the union's county sugar beet committee, says the corporation will “slaughter the beet industry if they carry on this way.”

But the corporation maintains that both the European Economic Community annual price review, to be announced in the spring, and probable further adjustments in the “green pound" will result in substantially increased income for growers next year.

Meanwhile, this year's beet crop is likely to yield more sugar than the 1974 production, –but less than in a normal year, and certainly less than had been hoped.

Foreseeing a slow starting harvest, the corporation has announced a flexible opening plan for its 17 factories and its largest, –at Wissington, –is to open its gates for freeloading from 6 am, on Tuesday.

Hard ground.

The corporation had thought the hard ground would hamper early lifting, but this week's rain will help to soften the land and ease the problems of harvesting.

Mr. John Armstrong, agriculturist at Wissington, said this week that the local crop had the potential to average 12 tons of beet per acre, almost three tons better than last year, but more than two tons below the average.

The second disappointing beet crop in two years was the result of delayed spring drilling, often into poor, hastily prepared tilth, and particularly the result of the long summer drought.

But it is expected the sugar content of the beet will be fairly high.

This week samples contained an average of 15.01 percent of sugar, and over the entire campaign the average content could top 16 percent. This compares with 15.7 percent sugar last autumn.

Mr. Armstrong said that although virus yellow had been less of a problem than last year, infection was still very much higher than normal. About half the crop is estimated to be infected, as against 85 percent last year, and only 10 to 15 percent in a normal year.

It had been expected that virus yellow would again be serious this year, largely because of the mild winter which allowed aphids and host plants to survive.

But infection had started later in 1975, and it was the long drought rather than disease, that was mainly responsible for the poor showing of the crop this year.

Late start.

He said some beet crops would make regrowth during the autumn, but owing to the late start to the campaign, farmers would be well advised to load beet according to their permit programme.

There will be freeloading at the factory during next week with some 500 loads of beet needed per day to maintain slicing. There will also be freeloading at the Lynn factory, which opens on Monday morning.

One of the problems in harvesting is expected to be the very small beet, and to help farmers lift these small roots efficiently, a leading harvester manufacturer is making available a special web attachment.

This is being supplied by F A Standen and Sons, (Engineering), of Ely: it consists of plastic sleeves fitted to the web links on the main web, which lifts beet from the ground, stopping the small beet from falling through to the ground.

The firm's sales director, Mr Bob Baxter, said: “Sugar beet yields will no doubt be light this autumn, and farmers will want to keep small beet wastage to an absolute minimum.”

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Mixed Blessings – Ely Takes Rough with The Smooth.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, October the 16th, 1975.

Industry in the Ely area has had a mixed year. Appleyard Lincoln, Ely’s boatyard, has closed, and Tillotson’s, the corrugated case manufacturer, has been on short-time working.

But at nearby Littleport, Burberry's clothing factory has been having a boom year.

Appleyard Lincoln were hit by the 25 percent VAT charge on boats, which led to a total drying up of home market orders.

An attempt to remain in business by just servicing and repairing boats did not meet with success.

The packaging industry is usually one of the first to be affected by changes in the economic situation.

Tillotson's, who have factories in Ely and Burwell, have been working on the almost hand to mouth basis, returning to five-day working when there are sufficient orders, but the future is unpredictable at present.

Another firm which, like Tillotson's, was on short-time working earlier this year is Gazelle Vanguard Plastics, of Broad Street, Ely.

Factory manager Mr Terry McConnell said that the firm was back to full-time working and was even taking on new employees. “It is difficult to see too far ahead,” he said. “But certainly, in the short term, things look quite good.”

Mr. Alan Ashton, president of the Ely and District Chamber of Trade and Industry, predicted a tough time ahead for industry in general.

His own companies in Ely have been doing reasonably well, he said, but since some of the equipment they manufacture, such as anti-pollution equipment for factories and storage vessels, comes under the heading of capital expenditure, he could see that there could be problems.

“Obviously things were tight, but now I think it's going to be extraordinarily tight,” he said.

The future of agricultural machinery manufacturers such as F A Standen, (Engineering) Limited, of Station Road, Ely, rests largely on the success or failure of this year's harvest.

Mr. David Newman, managing director, said that a good harvest for the farmers could mean more orders for Standen’s. The best indicator for the future would probably be given at the Smithfield Show in December.

Nearly all of Standen’s business on the home market has been providing replacements for worn out machinery. But the export market has been providing the firm with plenty of work.

This year they have had a large order from Greece, and hope to follow it up next year with orders from Iran and Syria.

One way in which the company could be affected in the future is by the increasing unwillingness of dealers to tie up capital in stock.

Dealers are no longer holding stocks of machines which can cost between £2,500 and £4,000 each. They prefer to order from the manufacturer when they have definitely made a sale.

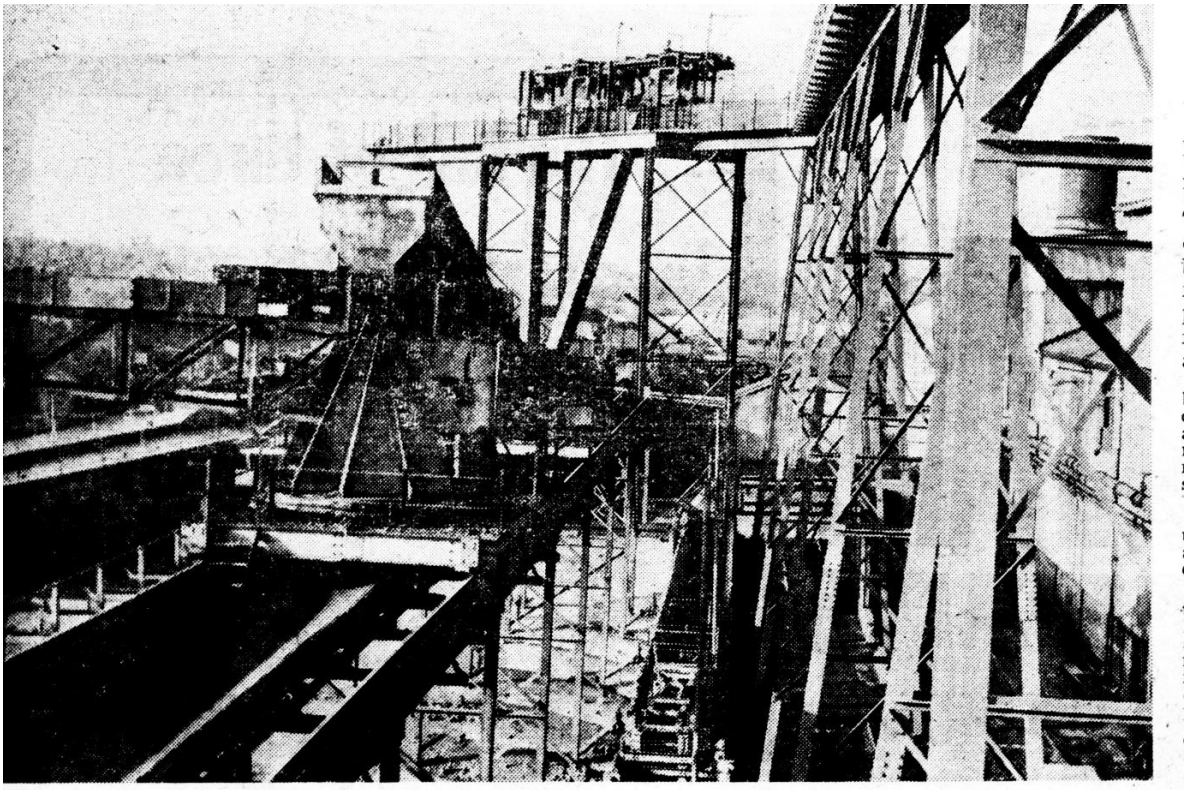
The Burberry factory at Littleport produces raincoats which are famous throughout the world. It was one of seven factories which helped Burberry's to win their third Queens Award to industry this year.

The award was for export achievement, and earlier this year the Littleport factory completed an order for 3,000 raincoats for Japan.

Mr William Pratt, the works manager, said. “We're pleased to say we’re on the up and up. We're taking on all the people we can get, and we still want further production.

Photograph and caption Below: The photograph shows the flumes and beet conveyor system.

Caption reads: Part of the works at the Beet Sugar factory, Ely.



*Part of the works at the Beet Sugar factory, Ely.*

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Sweet and Sour Sugar Future.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, December the 4th, 1975.

Sugar beet politics take some understanding, yet they could have a profound effect on the Cambridgeshire landscape during the next decade.

About one-sixth of the agricultural land in the area is occupied by the beet crop, and it is now such a dominant and established feature, that the thought that it could be in jeopardy seems almost incomprehensible.

Yet the pressures from continental producers, particularly the French, are putting the British industry on a knife edge, and it needs only a few miscalculations for the whole beet structure to crumble.

That's why, at a Fisons agrochemical division conference in Cambridge, the British Sugar Corporation were ringing the alarm bells.

For farmers, –and it's no secret that county farmers have been in the forefront of a battle for a better deal, –are threatening to drop the crop altogether if they don't get their way. But if they

pile on the pressure too hard, then it could mean disaster. The improved returns of the kind they have been offered have to be contained if plans for future development of the crop are to go ahead.

This means that like most businessmen, farmers may have to accept a situation where they could be pushed out of beet altogether if they are not prepared to accept that the crop might be something of a loss leader for a few years.

British Sugar Corporation is committed to a five-year, £90 million expansion programme, most of it concentrated at the major factories where it is possible to make provisions for processing beet.

To do this, it needs to be able to invest £20 million a year, and this level can only be achieved if farmers will accept that they cannot expect their full demands to be met.

The crunch comes in 1980, when Britain will be seeking to increase its basic tonnage of 1,040,000 tons, to around one and three quarter million tons. To do this, we will need to show that not only can we handle the beet, but that British producers have been consistently producing at this level to make it worthwhile.

Continental producers have their eyes on a good potential British market, and the French particularly have ruthlessly followed a big expansion programme which has also involved a regular surplus in production.

They can reinforce their argument by showing that their yields are consistently higher, and that their factory capacity can handle far more beet, and still not be overstretched.

Their experience of the crop dates back to Napoleonic days, whereas British farmers can look back little more than 50 years.

In East Anglia, it has become a vital part of the rotation, yet farmers have been calling for far more profitable crops like oilseed rape and other slightly more exotic extensions.

If they push their luck too far, then a crop worth nearly £10 million to Cambridgeshire farmers could be lost, –a crop which would be difficult to replace on a widespread scale.

But the corporation's agricultural and research director, Mr. J Oldfield, made it clear that if farmers did not give the cooperation they were seeking, then they could force the British Sugar Corporation the other way into streamlining its capacity.

An interesting local point is that while rumours of the Ely factory closure have been constantly dismissed, there are physical difficulties, which mean that one day it will be obsolete.

With about 40,000 acres of beet in the region, it seems impossible to imagine that it could all disappear, especially when the Government have at least given lip service to making Britain more self-sufficient in food supplies.

Sugar is one area where we could save a good deal of foreign currency, by switching the emphasis from cane supplies, which were once a cheap alternative but now appear to be an expensive luxury, where Britain is at the mercy of ruthless commercial deals.

At present we import two-thirds of our supplies, but it would be better if this was reduced to half.

There is, then, nothing sweet about the sugar racket, as the recent crisis showed. But Britain needs a higher level of performance all round if the Continental challenge is to be staved off.

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Ely Sugar Beet Crop up to Forecasts.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, December the 12th, 1975.

The beet sugar “campaign” for the Ely factory of the British Sugar Corporation had been up to initial forecasts, a spokesman for the corporation said yesterday.

He said the “campaign” would probably end this month, but could give no definite date.

“They have had a good season. Conditions have been very good compared with last year. There has never been a shortage of supplies throughout the ‘campaign’. The factory has run very well.”

While stating that this year's crop was up to initial forecasts, he said the crop for the last two years had been below average, because of the weather.

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Record Beet Acreage.

The Lincolnshire Free Press, Tuesday, February the 3rd, 1976.

British Sugar Corporation have announced that they have achieved their target sugar beet acreage for this year, and are sending out acceptances to growers for a record 510,000 acres, (206,400 hectares).

This compares with last year's figure, itself a record, of 488,000 acres.

When British Sugar announced their target acreage last October, many said there was no chance of its achievement, as growers would turn from sugar beet after two poor crops.

The growers, encouraged by British Sugar's five-year expansion plan for the industry and a price of about £19 a tonne, with allowances, have proved the sceptics wrong.

Executive.

British Sugar's chief executive John Beckett said: “This is a concrete demonstration that growers are backing our plans to expand the UK beet sugar industry.”

British Sugar will be accepting all the 206,400 hectares, but anticipates that as usual, the actual area drilled, will be somewhat lower than the area offered.

As agreed with the National Farmers Union last October, growers offering the same area as last year, and those offering more, have been accepted for the same contracted tonnage as in 1975, while the contracted tonnage of those offering significantly less, has been reduced in proportion.

In fairness to existing growers, new growers have been offered a nominal two tonnes a hectare.

But British Sugar has stressed in a letter to growers, the probability is that all or most beet will attract the full, 'A'-quota price, (approximately £19 a tonne with all allowances), as total sugar production is unlikely to exceed the 'A'-quota ceiling of 1,040,000 tonnes, unless there is an exceptionally good yield throughout all growing areas.

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New Works Manager at Ely Factory.

The Saffron Walden Weekly News, Thursday, February the 26th, 1976.

A new works manager has been appointed at the British Sugar Corporation's Ely factory, Mr Bob Palmer, who takes over from Mr Tom Lubienski.

Mr Palmer has been assistant works manager at the Corporations Nottingham factory since 1972. Born in Scotland, he joined the corporation in 1947.

Aged 47, he is married with two sons, and on three occasions during his career he has been abroad to act as consultant in the development of beet sugar industries in Russia and Iran.

Mr Lubienski, who has been works manager at Ely since 1967, has been appointed project manager at British Sugar's central offices in Peterborough.

Polish-born Mr Lubienski has worked for the corporation for 25 years. He joined British Sugar after seeing war service in the Polish Navy, and spending a short period at a Manchester engineering firm.

He has been at the Ely factory for just over 13 years. He was appointed assistant works manager in 1962.

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BSC Expansion Plans Threatened.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, March the 9th, 1976.

Trade union pressure is threatening the British Sugar Corporations expansion programme, – and could lead to housewives paying much more for their sugar.

This is the claim of the corporation, which fears that union pressure, aimed at retaining jobs in the port refineries processing cane sugar, could lead to a U-turn in Government policy.

Trade union representatives of the port refiners' employees, argue that alternative supplies of raw sugar should be found to keep all the refineries open, and demand that British Sugar's expansion programme should be abandoned.

This programme, with Government backing, is aimed at expanding home sugar production from 950,000 to 1.25 million tons in an average crop year by 1980, and will involve enlarging five factories, including Wissington, already one of the largest in Europe.

This expansion will replace the import of raw sugar from Australia, not allowed by the European Economic Community. But developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific, still have the right to export 1.3 million tons of sugar to the UK.

British Sugar claims that alternative supplies which the trade unions have suggested, would be unreliable and uneconomic, and that to guarantee the housewife reliable supplies of reasonably priced sugar, and to help the balance of payments, it is vital to go ahead with the expansion of the home industry.

Rival arguments.

It says there is no surplus beet for the port refiners to process, and it rejects trade union arguments that the UK does not produce a reliable crop.

Trade union representatives argued that after two poor harvests, the farmers would turn against sugar beet. But, says British sugar, farmers look at the crops long term record and see a crop of remarkable consistency. This year they have contracted to grow a record 510,000 acres.

Between 1958 and 1975, in the majority of the years, the yield of sugar per acre has been consistent at between two, and two and a half tons per acre. In three years, 1960, 1964, and 1971, the yield exceeded two and a half tons, and in 1974 and 1975 it was below 2 tons.

Statistically, there is a poor crop, once every 20 to 25 years.

Never before have there been two successive poor years, and in a temperate climate such as ours, this is unlikely to occur again. These are the facts that farmers go on.

British Sugar says it has been argued, that to grow sugar beet in the UK is a poor utilisation of our land resources. This is simply not so.

Land is cleaned by the crop, and subsequent cereal crops have significantly higher yields, i.e., beet is an essential and beneficial break-crop, and in the main arable areas of this country it is the cornerstone of the rotation cycle.

Before the beet is taken to the factory, the green tops are cut. These are equal in animal feed value to half a ton of barley per acre. After the sugar is extracted from the beet, the residual pulp, when dried and mixed with residual molasses, is equal again in animal feed value, to one ton of barley per acre.

Future at risk.

British Sugar say that should, through intense political pressure, its expansion programme be abandoned, its future efficiency and cost effectiveness would be at risk.

The probability would then be of both sides of the UK sugar industry running uneconomically, and thus being forced to charge extremely high prices and being totally undercut by European imports.

“The only economic, rational solution, is to stick to the Government's plan: an expanding British Sugar Corporation, supplying 1.25 million tonnes by 1980, and while cane raws are available, the port refiners supplying up to 1.25 million tonnes, –it says.

If, however, there is a U-turn in policy, there is the serious risk of a lame duck sugar industry, soaring prices, soaring sugar imports, loss of jobs and security, and a depressed agriculture industry."

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British Sugar Expansion.

£4 million to be spent on local factories.

The Peterborough Standard, Friday, October the 1st, 1976.

As farmers prepare to harvest this year's sugar beet crop, the British Sugar Corporation has announced that more than £4 million is to be spent during the next twelve months on the expansion and modernisation of local factories.

Most of the money is allocated for Wissington, in a £26 million capital expenditure programme for 1976 to 1977, representing the second stage of British Sugar's £100 million, five-year expansion plan.

At Wissington, which processes most of the beet grown in the March area, a £10 million reconstruction was completed in 1971 to boost the daily slice rate from 3,000 tons of beet producing raw sugar, to 7,000 tons producing white sugar.

During the next 12 months, a further 3 and a quarter million pounds will be invested in the factory to increase capacity to 9,350 tonnes a day.

This will ensure that Wissington remains the biggest of British sugars 17 factories, and also one of the most modern beet sugar plants in the world.

This year, the area of beet grown in the factories catchment area by 1,585 growers is 20,600 hectares, (51,000 acres), worth between fifteen to twenty million pounds to local farmers.

An additional 5,000 hectares, (12,500 acres) of beet, will be required to achieve the increase in factory throughput.

Confidence.

Work is going ahead at Spalding factory, on the improvement of beet reception facilities, and improving sugar extraction. At Ely, £45,000 was spent last year on replacement of plant.

The expansion is in line with British Sugar's confidence for the future, –despite two unfavourable growing years, –and its assurance to growers, that capacity will be available to process the anticipated increase in sugar beet production necessary to produce the target of 1,250,000 tonnes of sugar, by 1980.

By that date, British Sugar aims to be producing half the UK's sugar requirements with the completion of its massive £100 million expansion and modernisation programme.

Wholeheartedly backed by the Government White Paper, "Food from our own resources", and the National Farmers Union, the expansion will bring direct savings of at least sixty million pounds a year on the UK's Food Import Bill.

The scheme to be carried out at existing factories will be the equivalent of building three big new plants. For farmers, this expansion provides the opportunity to grow more beet, thus increasing the profitability of the crop.

The housewife and industrial users will benefit, as British Sugar's increased production and efficiency will play a large part in keeping the price of sugar down in this country. The national sugar beet crop this year, covers a record area of 206,483 hectares, (510,219 acres). The crop in Cambridgeshire totals 27,459 hectares, (67,850 acres).

Stress.

Like every other arable crop, sugar beet has been under stress this summer from the abnormally high temperatures and the national drought conditions.

Fortunately, with the early spring, which offered the advantages of early drilling in very good seed beds, the deep-rooted beet plants have managed to survive the drought far better than many other crops.

This has certainly highlighted the benefits to be gained from drilling the crop early. After battling through the difficult conditions of a late spring during the two previous seasons, growers faced a different and improved situation in the spring this year.

Working up suitable tilths in which to sow the crop proved a pleasure, and growers were able to achieve the earliest drilling possible for many years.

Improvement.

Much of the crop was drilled in March, some even in February, and the whole national area was in the ground by mid-April.

This was a considerable improvement over last year, when only 16 percent of the national sugar beet crop was drilled by the end of March, the majority of the crop not being drilled until the second-half of April, and even during the first week of May.

Emergence of the plants was good during early April, but then growth became retarded by cold weather conditions. Showers which fell on the beet during May, helped it through the following dry month of June, when the plants were then meeting across the rows.

Since then, of course, the crop has been caught up in the drought. Nevertheless, in many parts of this area, the crop has maintained a certain amount of progress.

● An aerial view of Wissington factory. This modern complex is the biggest of British Sugar's 17 factories.

Photograph and caption adjacent:

Caption reads: An aerial view of Wissington factory. This modern complex is the biggest of British Sugar's 17 factories.

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Shake-Up in Top Jobs at BSC.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, October the 6th, 1976.

A shake-up in the British Sugar Corporation management structure has led to the Ely processing factory being included in a newly-formed southern region of five factories, with Bury Saint Edmunds, Felsted, Cantley and Ipswich.

The regional director will be Mr Don Tidy, who is currently the area manager at Bury Saint Edmunds and Ely, and his regional production manager will be Mr Tom Long, who spent three years at Ely as the works manager.

British Sugar's chief executive Mr. John Beckett said: “With the expansion of the company in a highly competitive market, it has become apparent that central control of operations will exhibit signs of strain.”

“The new organisation provides for a decentralisation of control of operations from head office.”

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Late Opening for Ely Beet Sugar Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, October the 6th, 1976.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory will be among the last to open for the new processing season on October the 12th. A British Sugar Corporation spokesman said this was because of the late growth of the crop.

But the company says the unprecedented season has made it impossible to estimate yields accurately.

The drought has caused inconsistent growing patterns, and recent rains, while they can do nothing but good, have produced variations in the growth rate of the crop.

However, it is expected that there should be between 700,000 and 800,000 metric tonnes of sugar, compared with last year's 640,000 tonnes.

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Beet Sugar Factory Season Expected to End This Month.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, January the 10th, 1977.

The Ely Beet sugar factory is expected to close at the end of this month after an all-out harvesting campaign, which has gone more smoothly than was originally expected.

Overall, more than 75 percent of the crop has been harvested from the 30,000 acres in the mid-Anglian region served by the factory.

The crop, worth about £12 million to the area's farmers, has turned out to have a much lower sugar content than predicted, because of the prolonged autumn rainfall.

This made the crop difficult to lift at one stage, but the recent heavy frosts have enabled farmers to get on to the land, and now 92 percent of the crop is out of the ground, and either in roadside clamps or at the factories.

Other factories taking beet from the region, –Felsted, near Chelmsford, and Bury Saint Edmunds, –also report good progress.

“On the whole, it has gone much better than we expected, " said a British Sugar Corporation spokesman at Peterborough. “There have been few mechanical breakdowns, and over the country as a whole we shall be finished by the end of the month, although in the north, it will be mid-February, because of more delays due to the weather.”

Agriculturists are to meet later this week to settle the Ely factory closing date, and to assess final yields and performance.

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Unharvested Beet May End Up as Animal Feed.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, February the 8th, 1977.

The British Sugar Corporation said today, it would not be worth their while to re-open the Ely factory to take the 200 acres of beet still trapped in the ground.

“The amount left represents less than half a day's work, and it just wouldn't make economic sense,” their spokesman added.

A demand for the factory to be reopened was made by Cambridgeshire farmers last week, after it was reported that a random survey in the Ely area had revealed 16 growers have 173 acres of unharvested beet.

Farmers are arguing that the heavy transport costs of sending the remaining beet to the nearest factory still open, at Brigg in Lincolnshire, are not covered by the present allowances, and that they will end up out of pocket.

Potatoes.

But the corporation points out that farmers were warned last autumn that it was important to lift their beet early.

Many of them preferred to take up potatoes, and as a result we were only ticking over for the first few weeks,” he commented. “We can't really be expected to keep the factory open for such a small amount of beet.”

The more likely prospect now is that the beet will be sold in the region for animal feed.

Low sugar contents and the resulting low prices are thought, along with the extra £3 a ton transport costs, to mean it is unlikely the farmers involved will be prepared to send their beet to Brigg.

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Good Year for Sugar Beet?

Asks J D Ridge, Anglo-Maribo Seed, Limited.

The Sleaford Standard, Thursday, March the 24th, 1977.

The last three years have been anything but kind to the sugar beet grower, as Lincolnshire farmers will scarcely need to be reminded.

In 1974, an abnormally dry spring delayed germination in many crops, and in some cases resulted in total loss, because of complete absence of emergence. Then, to make matters worse, we had the most severe attack of virus yellows for something like 17 years.

Then, in two successive years we had long, hot summers which reduced yields considerably. True, the rains of last September helped to boost yields above the levels at one time feared, but at the cost of lower sugar contents and prolonged and difficult harvesting.

Perhaps we need these occasional reminders that, despite all our progress and the achievements of science, in the end, Mother Nature holds the final key to our success.

Tempted.

Inevitably, these three lean years have given farmers cause to look more closely at the costs and returns of their sugar beet crops, and some have been tempted to reduce their beet acreage or even stop growing it altogether.

Personally, I find it difficult to believe that experienced sugar beet growers would forsake a crop, which has been one of the sheet anchors of intensive arable farming for almost half a century.

It would certainly be ironical if, after years of demanding a greater UK sugar beet acreage, growers were to get cold feet just when the opportunity of increasing the acreage presented itself at last.

After all, farmers don't stop growing cereals just because of a couple of poor years, so why should they stop growing sugar beet because the weather has hit them for even 3 successive seasons.

It seems even less likely that a wise farmer will drop the crop when one considers the amount of backbreaking labour which used to be entailed in growing sugar beet twenty years ago, and how much easier it is these days, thanks to improved seed varieties, selective herbicides, and sophisticated machinery for drilling and harvesting the crop.

Redress.

My guess is that it only needs Nature to redress the balance with one above-average year, and the clamour for more sugar beet acreage will be heard again.

In those circumstances, any growers who had forfeited a part of their acreage would clearly regret their decision.

Whether 1977 will bring that above-average yield remains to be seen. Certainly, the law of averages would seem to suggest that we are unlikely to have yet another bad growing season, --even though the heavy rains, which still continue at the time of writing, would seem to threaten some delayed drilling.

However, while it would take a brave man to forecast the outcome of this year's beet crop, it can at least be said that it starts off under good auspices so far as the seed is concerned.

For the same hot, dry weather last summer, which limited the development of the root crop, provided ideal conditions for the pollination, maturing and harvesting of the seed crop, with the result that the raw material received from the seed growers, formed an excellent basis for processing to the final product.

As most farmers nowadays are aware, the seed which they drill differs markedly from the seed as it is grown. Indeed, it will have undergone between 15 and 20 different processes, and will have been reduced to a fraction of its original bulk.

But despite all the continuing improvements in processing techniques, –and these have been no less dramatic than the changes in sugar beet growing, –clearly the quality of the seed when it reaches the processor is still an important factor.

For this season's seed that quality was high, for the reasons I have mentioned, and this is reflected in the seed going to farmers for drilling this spring.

So, with seed of high germination and good seedling vigour, –as demonstrated by tests in our Anglo-Maribo laboratories and growing rooms, farmers are assured of a sound start to the new season.

Let us hope that this year, the weather will make up for its past misdeeds, and provide the other requisites for a record sugar beet crop.

Photograph and caption below:
Caption reads: Beet being loaded on the farm ready for delivery to the factory.

Beet being loaded on the farm ready for delivery to the factory.

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Beet Factory Opens Soon.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, September the 22nd, 1977.

The Ely beet sugar factory is due to open for the new season on October the third, one week later than first planned.

The date is a compromise. Some delay was essential because of the late cereal harvest, but if the factory opened much later, the season would run too far into 1978.

A spokesman for the British Sugar Corporation explained that if the season dragged on for too long, the risks of beet deterioration and harvesting problems would increase.

“It is therefore important that growers make their early deliveries to enable factories to operate at full capacity as soon as possible,” he said.

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Threat to Beet Harvest.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, September the 29th, 1977.

The Cambridgeshire sugar beet harvest, worth about £15 million, could be badly disrupted by industrial action, in support of a wage claim at three processing factories.

Workers at the three factories in Kings Lynn, Peterborough and Wissington, Norfolk, are refusing to do round-the-clock shift work.

It is expected that this will have serious repercussions for farmers in northern Cambridgeshire and the Fens. But at present, the Ely factory is not involved in the action, so farmers in the southern part of the county are unlikely to be immediately hit by the dispute.

The district organiser for the National Union of Agricultural Workers, Mr George Rowlands, said that the process workers are dissatisfied with a corporation offer, of between £1.11, and £1.50 an hour.

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Pay Cloud Threatens as Sugar Campaign Begins.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, October the 5th, 1977.

Although the Ely sugar beet processing factory is now underway as planned, there are fears that an unofficial pay dispute might escalate to disrupt the harvesting programme.

If this happened, it could mar the prospects for a good quality crop, which has showed signs of providing some compensation for the disappointments of the past two years, claimed a National Farmers Union spokesman.

Sugar levels are reported to be up to the 16 percent mark, and the British Sugar Corporation is expecting that Ely will contribute to a record output of more than one million tons.

But the pay dispute is a menacing cloud on the horizon, and already beet in northern Cambridgeshire is piling up on the roadsides, with the closure of five factories, including Peterborough and Kings Lynn.

Work to rule.

About 1,500 factory workers have imposed a work-to-rule, after the rejection of a 20 percent wage claim, which the British Sugar Corporation claim breached the Government's pay guidelines.

Hundreds of acres in the Fens are threatened by the action, although most of the beet in the area goes to Ely.

Mr Mike Hollingsworth, the National Farmers Union Eastern region spokesman, said that if the dispute is resolved, as expected, on Friday when the British Sugar Corporation is putting forward some new proposals, he thought most farmers wouldn't be too disturbed.

The full claim has been drawn up by the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers.

It includes a 20 percent rise, a shorter working week, an improved holiday bonus, and a productivity deal.

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Beet Campaign Draws to Close.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, January the 9th, 1978.

The sugar beet processing campaign at the British Sugar Corporation’s Ely factory is expected to be complete by the middle of the month.

A spokesman for the corporation said that the Ely factory would be among the first four factories to close.

Harvesting has gone more smoothly than in recent years. By the end of December, 91 percent of the beet crop for the area had been delivered to the Ely factory, compared with 78 percent the previous year.

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Freudian Flip Turns into a Flop.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, February the 13th, 1978.

The Isle of Ely's Liberal MP, Mr Clement Freud, might be an expert on food, but the art of pancake tossing had him stumped at the weekend.

For Mr Freud dropped his pancake five times during his race against former Miss Anglia, Sneh Gupta, at Ely on Saturday.

To make things easier for him, the organisers of the event, the Isle of Ely Lions Club shortened the High Street course. But even then, Miss Gupta romped home ahead of him.

The couple grabbed frying pans, after teams from the Ely area had battled it out to reach the finals of the annual city pancake race.

The final proved to be a dead heat between teams from the British Sugar Corporation at Ely, and Littleport Village College. The trophy, a frying pan, was presented to the two teams by Mr Freud. It will be kept by each team for six months.

Proceeds from the event will go to the Mayor of Ely's playground appeal fund.

*Freudian flip turns into a flop*

Gastronomic capers as Clement Freud takes on Sneh Gupta in the Ely pancake race. 3837816

Photograph and caption adjacent:

Caption reads: Freudian flip turns into a flop. Gastronomic capers, as Clement Freud takes on Sneh Gupta in the Ely pancake race.

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Beet Growers' Best Season for Four Years.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, February the 17th, 1978.

More than 2,000 sugar beet growers in the Ely factory area had the best season for four years, the British Sugar Corporation revealed yesterday.

After last year's extremely bad performance, due to a combination of adverse conditions, their returns improved dramatically to about £281.00 per acre.

The average yield at Ely was up to 33.3 tonnes per hectare, (2.4 acres), the best in the Eastern region of five factories.

Unfortunately, the sugar content was not quite so good due to the nature of the soil, but it was still better than for a long time at 16.7 percent.

Altogether the Ely factory produced 47,000 tonnes of sugar, which was worth more than £7,000,000 to growers.

Good drilling.

Commenting on the figures, the corporation's research director, Mr Alan Gibbs, attributed the success of the past season to an adequate rainfall early on, and good drilling conditions.

Currently, he thought the weather might help to reduce the level of aphid damage which had occurred in the past, and if this was so, he expected that it would be a “vintage year for the crop.”

With Britain due to renegotiate its sugar beet acreage next year, it was vital that it maintained its present level of achievement.

Altogether, the region produced 311,000 tonnes of white sugar, with an average yield from the five factories involved of 31.57 tonnes per hectare, (12.57 tonnes per acre).

Despite it being a good year, it was still lower than at first expected, because low rainfall and cold weather in the late summer and autumn upset growth.

But this was offset by the high sugar content of 17.2 percent, giving a sugar yield of 5.5 tonnes per hectare, (2.2 tonnes per acre).

The total area of sugar beet in the region last year reached 66,000 hectares, (166,000 acres, grown by 4,400 farmers). Their total payments will amount to about £45.3 million.

The crop always looked one of the healthiest in recent years, although later on, harvesting conditions were difficult, and there was the added complication of an industrial dispute which intruded on the start of the processing campaign in November.

Stepping up.

British Sugar’s regional director, Mr Don Tidy, outlined the region’s contribution to a £70,000,000 factory improvement drive.

Growers who send their beet to the Bury factory will get the benefit of a major investment, which will enable the factory to step up its output in the next two years from 6,300 tonnes a day slicing rate, to 10,000 tonnes after an expenditure of £18,000,000.

Mr Tidy said he was extremely optimistic about beet prospects in the region, particularly as the costs were lower than on the continent where the level of sugar output was much higher.

Larger share.

But he thought the key to the whole outlook was that continental growers would be faced with very high transport costs, which would outweigh their advantage if they wanted to get a larger share of the Common Market sugar production.

At the moment, Britain was very nearly self-sufficient, and he could not see any prospects of anyone else being able to give the British housewife a better bargain.

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Beet Men Welcome the Cold.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, February the 23rd, 1978.

While most people have been moaning about the snow and bad weather, local sugar beet growers have welcomed such a cold start to the year.

The frost killed off many of the bugs that retard growth, and the British Sugar Corporation say the seedbed prospects are better than they have been for several years.

Last year's harvest was hampered by low rainfall and cold weather in the late summer. But the situation was eased by a high sugar content. The local average was 17.1 percent.

From early November the harvesting conditions were just about ideal, and there was a regular supply of beet to the British Sugar Corporation factories at Bury Saint Edmunds and Ely.

When the whole crop was in, the two factories had produced 139,000 tonnes of sugar and 94,500 tonnes of dried molassed beet pulp.

The beet yield from farms in the Ely area was better than that from farms in the Bury Saint Edmunds area, 33.3 tonnes per hectare, compared with 31.26 tonnes per hectare.

But the sugar content from the Bury Saint Edmunds area was substantially better than the Ely percentage, 17.51, compared with 16.7.

A British Sugar Corporation spokesman attributed the difference to the different quality fen soil in the Ely district.

The two factories have paid out £20 million to growers. The average payment throughout East Anglia was £707 per hectare, or £281 per acre.

Throughout the region, 166,000 acres of beet was grown by 4,400 farmers. Total payments were £45.3 million.

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Good Beet Harvest Should Boost Processing Drive.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, September the 15th, 1978.

After three years of indifferent crops, the 55th sugar beet processing campaign at the Ely factory promises to produce better results from the 32,000 acres now poised for harvesting.

The factory’s 250 staff will swing into round-the-clock action on October the second, but success depends on the progress made with other crops in the region.

The campaign will last until early in the new year. The Ely factory will be one of 17 throughout the country trying to improve the prospect for sugar growers.

First reports indicate that the crop is an improvement on the mid-seventies. The British Sugar Corporation should be able to make record profits next year.

This would help to justify the lavish £100 million plan for buying new machinery and to step up British output to 1.25 million tonnes by 1980.

Revitalised.

British sugar, revitalised after Britain went into the Common Market, aims to persuade about half of us to buy the new Euro-sugar made from beet, instead of the cane produce.

Starting dates are provisional. The corporation's director of agricultural services, Mr Peter Dyke, said: “The beet crop has benefited from the mixed summer growing weather of sunshine and rain. However, this mixture has had an adverse effect on the cereal harvest, and any further stoppages will prevent some farmers from lifting their sugar beet on schedule.”

The corporation is keeping tight-lipped about sugar levels, but these are believed to be well over the 16 percent, and wastage is likely to be less than usual.

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Factory Delay Could Hit Sugar Beet.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, October the 27th, 1978.

Hundreds of tonnes of sugar beet could go to waste unless the British Sugar Corporation can get its Bury Saint Edmunds factory operating next week.

That is the situation throughout West Suffolk, as farmers begin stockpiling beet, –unable to get it to factories for processing.

West Suffolk National Farmers Union secretary Mr. David Ridge, said on Wednesday: “So far, there has been a major redirection programme, and beet has been taken to factories at Felsted, Ely and Ipswich.

Both Wissington and Bury Saint Edmunds have been unable to open, and this has caused the problem.

“Until now, the situation has been barely tolerable, but unless the Bury factory opens next week, the situation could become very critical.”

“Problems occur because this is the ideal time for lifting the beet. But when they are stored in clamps, there is a marked deterioration,” he said.

Deliver.

The beet loses moisture and becomes pulpy when it is stored too long.

For some local farmers, who operate on a small scale, there is no extra time for taking sugar beet to alternative factories. They want to deliver it as quickly as possible to a local factory.

A spokesman for British Sugar, Mr. David Baird, said: “I am afraid I cannot say exactly when the Bury factory will open.”

“We believe it will be possible to take beet in next week, but just which day is not yet known. Processing should begin a couple of days later.”

Problems.

At a meeting on Friday, it was agreed the enlarged factory must be opened as quickly as possible.

During that meeting, the National Farmers Union members talked with corporation officials about the problems both for farmers and for the corporation.

Opening time has been delayed because of problems with the second phase modernisation programme, costing £10 million.

Mr Baird said: “It has been a race against time throughout the summer to get the work completed. There has not been any one reason for a delay in opening.”

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Sugar Beet Bottleneck…

Farmers angry as Ely plant fails to cope with the crop.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, November the 24th, 1978.

Cambridgeshire sugar beet growers are angry at the bottleneck which has arisen at the Ely beet sugar factory, where beet from further afield has held up the handling of crops from the surrounding area.

Some growers are claiming to have lost hundreds of pounds, as the result of the chain reaction from delays elsewhere in East Anglia.

Piles of beet are accumulating on the roadside, and farmers fear that one of the best crops for five years might deteriorate seriously if left for too long.

In addition, the exceptionally mild autumn has meant that most of it has been harvested, even though the ground is hard and dry.

Dispute.

The trouble is no fault of the Ely factory, which is working flat out to cope with the crisis. But the British Sugar Corporation’s massive modernisation campaign has run into problems at Bury Saint Edmunds, which opened late and is still not in good shape.

Some beet has been transferred to Ely, which has also had to handle loads from Wissington in North Norfolk, where an industrial dispute is upsetting production.

This has all meant that early liftings of beet by growers, with 32,000 acres in the Cambridgeshire area contracted to the factory have been cut back to cope with the situation.

The Cambridgeshire National Farmers Union executive have been told that some growers who would by now have sent about half their beet, have been able to send only a quarter or a third.

Crisis.

One of the biggest growers in the area, Mr. David Morbey of Stuntney, near Ely, said that 1,000 tons of beet which should by now have left his farm is still waiting to be delivered.

Mr Morbey, a former chairman of the Isle of Ely National Farmers Union, who now represents the whole county on the National Farmers Union council, and is vice-chairman of the National Sugar Beet Committee, wants action taken to avoid a similar crisis next year.

He told the County Executive that the National Farmers Union headquarters is well aware of the demands by growers in the eastern counties, that the British Sugar Corporation should take steps to avoid delayed factory openings at the beginning of the 1979 campaign.

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Feeling Sour About Sugar Delays.

The Fenland Advertiser, Wednesday, November the 29th, 1978.

Angered by the second late start to the sugar beet campaign in successive years, local farmers are demanding that British Sugar should take steps to avoid further trouble next autumn.

This year the Wissington factory opened two weeks late, –through an industrial dispute, – and the opening of the Bury Saint Edmunds factory was even later, through installation of new plant.

The call for early British sugar action to avoid another repetition of trouble, came from the Cambridgeshire branch of the National Farmers Union meeting at Ely.

The branch was told that early liftings of beet contracted to Wissington and Bury Saint Edmunds, had to be diverted to other factories, and had resulted in deliveries by other growers being cut back.

Some growers had sent less than one third of their beet to the factory, compared with more than one half in the normal season.

Mr. David Morbey, who is vice chairman of the National Farmers Union's national sugar beet committee, said that 1,000 tonnes of beet that should have left his farm, was still waiting to be delivered.

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Farm Fears Grow for Livestock.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, January the 8th, 1979.

As Cambridge lorry drivers voted at the weekend to join the unofficial Transport and General Workers Union strike, farmers expressed fears about feeding livestock.

Much of the protein element in animal foodstuffs is imported via the docks where pickets are out in force.

And there have already been suggestions that local farmers and feed wholesalers might want to try to collect their supplies direct from the dockside.

Most farmers carry stocks for no more than one week.

Expressions of concern have been reaching National Farmers Union offices at Cambridge, where a spokesman said this morning that the situation could become “desperate” within a day or two.

But the Road Haulage Association Eastern Area office in Cambridge said that it had as yet no contact with the Transport and General Workers Union, which would help to identify what would be seen as “essential” supplies.

The Transport and General Workers Union has been supporting the strike by provincial newspaper journalists by refusing to cross their picket lines with supplies of newsprint.

As a result, officials at the union's Cambridge office said they would not speak to the editor of the “News” about their own strike.

The fuel shortage was not yet affecting Eastern counties bus services.

A Cambridge spokesman said that there were sufficient supplies for the foreseeable future, but some people had wrongly assumed there was a shortage simply because new bus timetables were in operation today and buses expected under the old timetable had not arrived.

The British Sugar Corporation is continuing its sugar beet campaign at Ely, which is not oil fired.

There was a “few days’ supply at Bury Saint Edmunds, but operations were going ahead at a reduced level because of weather conditions, and a shutdown was not yet contemplated, said a corporation spokesman.

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Fire Damages Ely beet.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, January the 16th, 1979.

Five tons of sugar beet pulp were severely damaged by a fire at the British Sugar Corporation’s Ely factory, at midnight last night. The fire is believed to have started after an electrical fault in the processing room’s conveyor system.

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Farmers Attempt to Beat the Clock.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, January the 23rd, 1979.

What promised to be one of the best beet harvests for five years, is now turning into a rescue operation as a result of the lorry drivers strike.

Now the Cambridgeshire Farmers Union secretary, Mr Derek Crawley, has warned that with each day of the dispute, beet piled up on the roadsides all around the county is deteriorating, and unlikely to bring the improved returns hoped for at the start of the campaign.

It is estimated that about 10 percent of the crop is waiting to go to the Ely factory, and the picture for farmers in the south and east of the county who send their crops to Bury and Felstead, is not much better.

“Farmers are doing all they can to get beet to the factories, by tractors and trailers and any other vehicles they have around, but it is an uphill struggle, " Mr Crawley added.

Costly.

Some farm workers are doing round trips of up to 30 miles to get beet in for processing. The result is likely to be one of the most costly haulage operations in recent years, especially as many of the improvised vehicles are now cracking up under the strain of being used for robust journeys beyond their capacity.

The losses expected are all the more galling, because farmers were hoping that the crop would recover from the slump experienced in the past five years.

Teething troubles at the re-equipped Bury factory, and at the giant Wissington plant in Norfolk, had a chain reaction throughout the British Sugar Corporation processing empire, and the campaign got off to a poor start. Then some extremely severe weather in November and December delayed harvesting.

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Critical Beet Farmers Want a Better Deal Next Season.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, February the 20th, 1979.

Cambridgeshire beet growers were yesterday critical of the way the past season has gone, and the county's National Farmers Union executive was urged to secure a better deal for the next campaign.

A resolution from the Soham branch blamed inept management by the British Sugar Corporation for the way beet from the area was handled at the Ely factory.

Frost.

Other growers did not like the system, which led to loads from other areas being switched to the factory while local crops could not get permits.

Nor were they satisfied with the treatment by hauliers carting for several growers.

It was felt that the Corporation was also unprepared for frost, which put the weighbridges out of action at Ely for a time.

But the meeting was undecided about how to tackle the problems, and the Sugar Beet Committee is to reconsider the affair to set what action should be taken. Many farmers want to see a review of the crisis, and a considered policy developed for Cambridgeshire beet.

While they are critical of the performance during the past campaign, a report to the executive pointed out that local corporation staff had gone to great lengths to overcome the problems, particularly those caused by the lorry driver's dispute.

It was agreed that the campaign had produced unusual difficulties after a growing season which had produced some of the best crops for five years.

Troubles.

However, right at the start, teething troubles after a modernisation scheme at Bury had triggered off problems elsewhere.

Then there were appalling lifting difficulties with the sudden onslaught of bad weather, and at the end of the campaign, the lorry drivers' action had brought further headaches.

Nevertheless, beet had been accepted, which in normal times would have been rejected out of hand.

Meeting.

The executive urged the committee to look again at the question of holding a meeting with the corporation to help thrash out the problems.

A salver was presented to Mr Fred Hobson to mark his retirement from the Ministry of Agriculture at Huntingdon. He was the region's Agricultural Executive Officer.

The 4,500 strong county branch raised £4,300 for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, which does welfare work for elderly and sick farmers.

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Record Beet Crop Hopes are Dashed.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, March the 23rd, 1979.

By Bill Hollowell, Agricultural Press Officer, British Sugar.

Although more than one million tonnes of sugar has been produced from the 1978 beet crop, the end result could have been much better.

At one stage there were high hopes that the excellent crop, grown on a record 208,000 hectares, (516,000 acres), and which earned farmers more than £150 million, would have produced –for the first time, –Britain's A quota of 1.04 million tonnes of sugar.

Last year's cold spring delayed drilling, but 90 percent of the crop was in the ground by April the 22nd, and although plant emergence was good, cold weather slowed development.

But from the end of May, warm weather and summer rain produced ideal growing conditions, and by the autumn the scene was one of a fine crop, still putting on sugar in the prevailing warm and sunny conditions, and which augured well for the final sugar result.

For the second year running, the crop escaped the aphid borne virus yellows disease, but the cold start to the season resulted in more bolting in the crop than anyone wanted to see. However, it is encouraging to note that more growers took action to remove bolters before they had a chance to shed their seed.

In addition, seed producers are intensifying their efforts to prevent bolters, and research into further methods of combating weed beet is being stepped up.

When the campaign got underway, good sugar contents were reported from all 17 factories, with some areas, notably the heavy lands around Felstead factory, returning 20 percent, and in some cases more.

Processing got off to a slower start at Southern Region's Bury Saint Edmunds factory. Completion of the second phase of its expansion programme delayed the start until November the 1st. To ease pressure there, thousands of tonnes of beet were diverted from the area to other factories at a cost to British Sugar of about £500,000.

The first hint of possible trouble ahead came in November and December. November ended with severe frosts, and December was marked by torrential rain, –more than 5 inches in some areas, –which flooded fields, and in many cases completely submerged the crop.

Harvesting either stopped or continued at a snail's pace throughout December, handicapped in turn by freezing conditions and a fuel oil shortage. Fortunately, the fuel oil shortage forced the closure of only one factory, Felstead, and for about a week.

The New Year brought the lorry drivers strike and more severe weather. The strike could have had a disastrous effect on the closing stages of the campaign. But the factories were kept going by the cooperation between growers who did everything they could to get their beet in, and factory management teams. They skilfully negotiated with local union officials to get the best possible deal to ensure the factories kept running.

Savage.

However, it was the weather that scored the biggest victory, particularly in the West Midlands. There, a disproportionate amount of the national crop, 40 percent, was still in the ground at Christmas.

The Eastern Counties suffered too. If anything, frost was more severe on that side of the country, –but not to the same degree, because beet clamped before the frost kept well, and processed well enough to dilute the effects of the more severely affected roots.

But the savage weather proved conclusively that it does not pay to gamble with the beet crop, which ideally should be lifted by Christmas and, so long as it is in a good condition, should be properly clamped and protected against frost damage.

By the end of this year, British Sugar will have completed the fourth phase, of its five-year, 150-million-pound expansion and modernisation programme. By the start of the 1979 processing campaign, it will be in a position to produce 1.25 million tonnes of white sugar, –half the nation's requirements, –from home grown sugar beet.

This year, the crop will be grown on more than 216,000 hectares, (551,000 acres), most of it in Eastern England, by some 15,000 growers.

And as they prepare for the coming season, they do so in the knowledge that a question mark hangs over the next five years.

Acreage.

Common Market negotiators will be meeting in Brussels in the coming months to thrash out a new five-year European sugar regime, due to take effect in January next year, and decisions taken this year will determine the future size of the UK beet sugar industry.

The UK has not achieved its 1.04 million tonnes of “A” quota sugar, under the existing five-year regime.

That was due partly to poor growing conditions in 1975 and 1976, –and of course, this year's experiences, –and partly because “Green Pound” manipulation depressed sugar prices, and therefore beet prices, so there was insufficient inducement for growers to further expand their acreage.

That could weaken the British case during negotiations, and some European Economic Community members will point to our lower yielding national crop as being a sign of poor efficiency.

Those arguments will be strongly countered in Brussels and anywhere else it is necessary to do so.

The UK case, says British sugar Agricultural Services Director, Peter Dyke, is that we are members of an Economic Community where lower yield, if allied to lower costs is as viable as high yield at high cost.

“Strategically, it is vital that half of Britain’s sugar requirements are produced at home, especially as we can show that our farm and factory production costs per tonne of sugar compare very favourably with the other European Economic Community countries.”

He has no doubts that British growers are as efficient as any in Europe, especially with the disadvantages of poorer soils and a less predictable climate.

His main concern is that sugar beet competes and competes well as a crop in our growers’ arable rotation.

And, he says, continued improvements in efficiency on the farm and in the factory, and cooperation between grower and processor will ensure the future of the British beet sugar industry.

Photographs and captions below:
First caption reads: A typical sugar beet harvesting scene.

**A TYPICAL sugar beet harvesting scene.**

Second caption reads: Ely factory beet reception weighbridge.

ELY factory beet reception weighbridge.

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Staff Moves at British Sugar.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, April the 3rd, 1979.

In a series of regional managerial changes announced on Thursday by British Sugar, Mr Don Brisbourne has been appointed agricultural manager for the central region. It includes Lynn and Wissington factories from May the 1st.

He will combine those duties with his present responsibilities as a director of Beet Sugar Developments.

He takes over the central region post from Mr Raymond Bond, who moves to the West Midlands as general manager for two factories.

Mr Brisbourne, who is 42, joined British Sugar in 1959, and worked at York and Kidderminster factories before moving to central offices in 1971, to reorganise and supervise the company's computerised crop reporting system.

He was later appointed deputy chief agriculturist, and when British Sugar's subsidiary company, –Beet Sugar Developments, –was formed, he became a director with special responsibility for agriculture.

In another move, Mr Desmond O'Toole retires as Central Region Production Manager on June the 30th, and Mr. David Ash will act as regional production manager while retaining his present position of regional personnel manager.

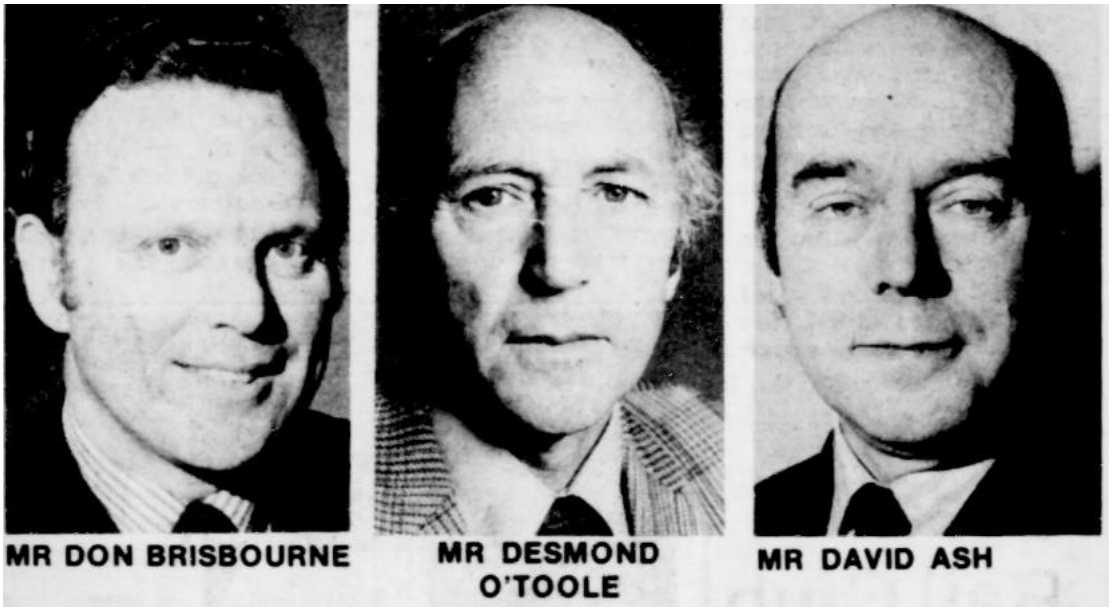
Graduate.

Mr O'Toole, who is 61, joined British Sugar in 1946, and after spells at Ipswich and Bury Saint Edmunds, moved to central offices where he became production manager three years ago.

Mr Ash, 47, began as a graduate trainee at the Felsted factory in Essex in 1956. He moved to the Ely factory in 1959, and three years later joined the technical staff at central offices.

He was appointed Peterborough factory works manager in 1965, and regional personnel manager two years ago.

Below is a photograph of the three gentlemen.

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British Sugar Names New Men.

The Suffolk Free Press, Thursday, April the 19th, 1979.

Mr Frank Turner has been appointed regional agricultural manager for British Sugar's southern region, which encompasses five factories, at Bury Saint Edmunds, Ipswich, Cantley, Ely and Felsted.

Currently agricultural manager at Allscott. Mr. Turner, aged 43, takes up his new duties on April the 1st. He succeeds Mr Alan Gibbs who is retiring.

Mr. Turner joined British Sugar as a fieldman at Selby factory in 1960.

He became trials officer and later agricultural development officer at York Factory, before moving to Allscott in 1975.

Mr Gibbs, age 61, joined British Sugar in 1950 as a fieldman at Cantley, becoming agriculturist at Bury Saint Edmunds in 1973.

He later became personal assistant to the agricultural director and was appointed chief agriculturist at central offices in 1973. Mr Gibbs took his present post three years ago.

In another southern region management move, Mr Eric Bruce will become regional production manager designate on October the 1st, 1979. He will retain his present responsibilities as works manager at the Ipswich factory during the 1979 to 1980 campaign.

Mr Bruce joined British Sugar at Cantley in 1951 as a trainee assistant chemist after gaining a Bachelor of Science degree from London University.

He had spells as assistant works manager at Peterborough, and works manager at Felstead, before transferring to his present post.

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White Sugar Comeback.

The Fenland Advertiser, Wednesday, September the 26th, 1979.

After a gap of 50 years, Peterborough's beet sugar factory will start producing white sugar again when it comes on stream for this year's campaign. And, when the factory starts up in October, it will mark the end of a £13 million two-year project, to convert it from a raw to white sugar production unit.

Opened in 1926, the factory produced white sugar for only three years, –going over to 100 percent raw in the 1929 to 1930 season.

The switch was influenced by two factors, the duty imposed on white sugar, and the influence of the UK sugar refineries.

The refineries, aided by the 1928 duty arrangements, sought by commercial means to induce the factories to concentrate on raw sugar production.

Besides offering favourable terms for raw sugar, they also made considerable reductions in the price of their refined white sugar. And that tended to make white sugar production at the beet factories unprofitable.

With Peterborough's conversion back to white sugar, Ely is now the only one of the company's 17 factories still producing only raw sugar. British Sugar's investment underlines their faith in the crop and farmers ability to grow it.

In the past few months, more than £28 million has been spent on just four major factory projects at Bury Saint Edmunds, where work is scheduled to be completed next year in its fourth and final phase, –Cantley, Wissington and Peterborough.

To get Peterborough back to white sugar production has meant installing a new sugar end in the factory, and constructing two huge silos.

They alone cost about £4 million, and each have a capacity of 30,000 tonnes. In addition, enormous sugar production vessels had to be built and installed.

The silos have been designed to have the minimum impact on the environment. British Sugar originally planned for three concrete silos, similar to ones already in use at other factories. That proposal was rejected after a public inquiry.

The solution was reached as a direct result of the close cooperation and liaison between British Sugar, the city and county councils and Peterborough Development Corporation.

The beet sugar campaign normally lasts about four months, and the straight through white sugar production process will produce Peterborough's contribution to the whole year's supply in that time.

This year, over half a million acres of Britain's farmland is down to sugar beet, and that is seen as a splendid achievement after the delays caused by the cold, wet and late spring.

Since then, however, the crop has grown well and, as summer slipped into autumn, was continuing to make good progress in the prevailing weather conditions.

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Starting Date for Ely Sugar Factory Campaign.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, September the 27th, 1979.

The British Sugar Corporation factory at Ely is expected to start the 1979 processing campaign during the second week of October.

Provisional starting dates for the 17 British Sugar Corporation factories mean that most will be accepting beet from the first week in October.

However, Peterborough will be the last to open its weighbridge, because work on a fourteen-million-pound scheme, involving the conversion from raw sugar to white sugar production, has delayed the start until the third week of October.

Soil condition.

The British Sugar Corporations director of agricultural services, Mr Peter Dyke, stressed that the opening dates are provisional.

"They are entirely dependent on the availability of beet. Soil condition, which in many places is currently very hard, will be an important factor."

"Most factories will start processing beet within a day or two of opening, and it is vital that beet supplies are sufficient for high capacity, and therefore efficient production."

Provisional opening dates for local factories are: October the 1st, Kings Lynn and Wissington, –October the 5th, Bury Saint Edmunds, –October the 8th-9th, Ely, –October the 15th, Peterborough.

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Beet Harvest Looks Good.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, September the 28th, 1979.

Bury Saint Edmunds and district farmers began harvesting their sugar beet this week.

And, according to a British Sugar Corporation spokesman, good quality crops and equally good sugar yields are expected this year.

“Despite late drilling, the crop made rapid progress in recent weeks, and remains in an extremely healthy condition, " he said.

The Beet Sugar Factory in Bury is expected to begin slicing tomorrow, (Saturday), with the weighbridges opened to receive the first load today.

The spokesman added that these dates are provisional and subject to the company's opinion, based on information from regional and area National Farmers Unions as to the availability of beet.

Most British Sugar Corporation factories will be open a day or so before they are due to start the slicing process.

Those growers at Mildenhall under contract to Ely factory, have October the 8th as their target date. The factory will open its weighbridges and begin slicing then.

A British sugar spokesman warned of the dangers of lifting beet too soon. At this time of year, roots left in the clamp could deteriorate rapidly, he said.

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No Question of Ely Beet Sugar Factory Closing—BSC.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, October the 9th, 1979.

The British Sugar Corporation yesterday issued an assurance that the future of its Ely factory was secure.

As the new beet processing campaign got underway yesterday, there were fears that it could be the last at the factory. But a spokesman at its Peterborough headquarters refuted any suggestion that the factory was threatened with closure. “We have no plans at present to close any factories,” he said.

100 casual workers.

For years, the Ely factory has been relied on by people living in the area to provide seasonal work. This year, about 100 casuals have been taken on to boost the factory workforce to 330.

The British Sugar Corporation spokesman said the factory opened its weighbridge as planned, and the campaign was expected to last until January. He said initial deliveries by farmers showed that the beet promised good sugar content, although rain was now needed to soften the ground and ease harvesting.

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Sugar Beet Hazards.

The Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford Mercury, Friday, October the 19th, 1979.

The annual sugar beet season will be starting soon, and we will begin to see, appearing beside the roads and in the fields, the stockpiles of beet ready to be transported to the factories at Peterborough and Ely, says Mr V S Gilbert, Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire.

A number of problems and road safety hazards will soon begin to present themselves to road users. These are firstly, the appearance on the road of mud from the tractor wheels, and all farmers and farm employees are asked to take time to remove mud from vehicle wheels before going onto the highway. The depositing of mud on the road is an offence.

Secondly, the stockpiles of sugar beet should not be placed near to the road where they can either overflow into the road, or cause a road safety hazard by restricting the view etc, of road users.

Thirdly, and more important, is the proper carriage of the sugar beet from the farm to the factory. Care must be taken not to overload the container, and if the load is higher than the sides of the container, it is recommended that it be properly and securely netted. Remember, do not overload the vehicle.

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Sugar Content High as Mild Autumn Boosts Beet Crop.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, November the 13th, 1979.

By David Waterson.

The mild autumn has allowed farmers to make quick progress with the sugar beet harvest and the Ely factory has now sliced about 30 percent of the crop.

The sugar content is higher than for several years at about 17 percent, with farm yields averaging 34 to 35 tons per hectare, slightly above last year's level.

If the current progress is maintained, it is expected that most of the beet will have been lifted by Christmas, but a lot depends on the weather during the next month.

A spell of prolonged frost could put a brake on harvesting, which up to now has been ahead of schedule.

There have been few hold ups at any of the factories dealing with local crops at Peterborough, Ely, Bury and Felsted.

But teething troubles with new machinery at Peterborough, initially meant processing of the northern Fens crop was delayed. These problems have now been cleared.

Mr Bill Hollowell, a spokesman for the British Sugar Corporation, said although the ground was now becoming wet, farmers had got on well with lifting.

The £15 million crop, one of the most valuable in the region, has provoked considerable argument among farmers, who are demanding better prices, and have threatened to go into more profitable crops like oilseed rape.

The British Sugar Corporation said the fine autumn had helped to speed up harvesting. The drilling of more winter wheat had gone ahead smoothly in the earlier period, when the ground was hard.

The rain had come just right, to make beet lifting easier immediately afterwards. But, in some parts, the high moisture content of the soil had slowed down progress.

Disease damage, for the third year running, had been almost non-existent, but some factories had had difficulties in handling crops with a heavy soil content.

“All in all, though, farmers have responded well in getting on with the harvest despite the hard ground earlier on, " Mr Hollowell said.

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E E C Plan May Force Ely Sugar Factory to Close.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, November the 20th, 1979.

The Ely beet sugar factory might be closed if there was a big cut in the British sugar acreage, the Cambridgeshire National Farmers Union executive warned yesterday.

The British Sugar Corporation has always firmly denied frequent rumours in the past that Ely might be axed.

But, now, the whole future of the beet growing industry is in doubt because of Common Market proposals to cut the British slice of the market next year, as part of an overall reduction.

If these proposals go ahead, it is possible that up to five smaller factories, including Ely, might be closed.

However, Mr. David Morbey and Ely Farmer, who is a member of the National Farmers Union Headquarters Committee, thought any scheme was bound to be trimmed back. There was a strong likelihood that the proposals to alter the common markets sugar regime would not come into full effect until 1981.

Yesterday, it was claimed that eight of the smaller factories might have to be closed, with redundancies amounting to 2,500 people, (about 300 work at Ely).

Mr Morbey pointed out that the argument was about reducing the sugar mountain. Britain had nearly always under-produced on its main quota.

When the quota was exceeded, beet had to be sold outside the European Economic Community at the producer’s expense, usually with a lower return. But this was a rare event.

Mr Morbey did not name Ely, but instead referred to it as a “factory very close to here”.

Another proposal might mean that growers would lose the present arrangement for receiving an extra 80 to 90 pence a ton.

He was hopeful, though, that the region would not be as badly hit as had been suggested. There was an indication too, that it would not be possible to get the scheme off the ground in time for the next harvest, for which most growers had already fixed their contracts.

Mr Ted Morris, (Chatteris), wondered if there was any chance of the system being altered to get British growers a better deal. They were efficient producers who are not producing enough to meet national consumption.

While Britain produced the cheapest sugar per acre, it did not have the best yields per acre in the community, Mr Morbey replied.

Then, there were the problems of sugar supplies from the Commonwealth, and that there had been no really good crop since Britain joined the community.

It was unfair that Commonwealth sugar should be treated as a kind of sacred cow, claimed Mr H V Aveling, (March).

When there was a shortage, these producers had been quick to take advantage of the situation to demand high prices.

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‘No Cuts’ -- Beet Plant Pledge On.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, November the 30th, 1979.

Assurances have been given that the Bury Saint Edmunds beet factory will not suffer from any European Economic Community plans to cut the UK sugar production.

They have come from British Sugar itself after a statement was issued by chief executive, Mr John Beckett.

In a statement, he said. “The European Economic Community Commission has recently put forward a proposal which, if implemented, would:”

Mutilate a successful company, The British Sugar Corporation.

Put 2,500, --of a workforce of 6,000, --out of work.

Damage British agriculture.

Increase sugar prices to the housewife, and to food manufacturers.

Add £100 million to the UK’s food import bill.”

Safe.

This week, a company spokesman said: “Work on the major expansion at Bury Saint Edmunds will continue.

I am sure the factory would be safe from any cuts in the light of major expansion work carried out there during recent years, and planned for the future.”

The European Commission wants sugar production to be cut in all Member States to reduce an intractable surplus.

Success.

The spokesman continued: “At a time when we are so successful, and farmers are being urged to increase beet production, the Commission will have a fight on its hands.

British Sugar will fight the suggested cuts, as will the unions, and the farmers. They will fight hard to protect their interests.”

But he warned that should the cuts be implemented, eight of the company's 17 factories would have to go. They have not been named.

New man at BSC.

The British Sugar Corporation, Limited, has appointed Mr. Allen Howlett, aged 40, as director of industrial relations.

He takes up his new job on December the first, and began his career as a civil and structural engineer. He entered personnel work in 1965.

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Union to Fight Sugar Quota Cuts.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, December the 4th, 1979.

Trade unionists are to join the battle to save the Cambridgeshire sugar industry from Common Market cuts, which could threaten hundreds of jobs.

The campaign is being led by the Cambridgeshire area of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, which will be having crucial meetings with the British Sugar Corporation this week.

It is feared that the proposed trimming of the British sugar quota would not only imperil 300 workers at the Ely factory, but also cause beet-growing farms to reduce their labour force.

The Cambridgeshire organiser, Mr Peter Allenson, said that the repercussions of the cuts went even further, and local transport industry might also be badly hit.

Ely is thought to be one of eight factories which will be axed if the cuts go through.

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Farmers Try to Save Sugar Crops.

The Sleaford Standard, Thursday, January the 3rd, 1980.

Farmers in Lincolnshire and South Humberside are adding their weight to a campaign to save Britain's sugar industry.

Common Market plans to reduce Europe's sugar surplus, will mean a cut back of 30 percent of the UK's sugar beet acreage.

So, Lincolnshire National Farmers Union passed a resolution, urging their London headquarters to give all possible support to the British Sugar Corporation’s battle, to prevent the European Economic Community proposals being implemented.

Lincolnshire and South Humberside grew about one-third of British sugar, and the EEC's plans would have a serious effect here.

The county's growers think the plans are totally unfair, because they are not the farmers creating the European surplus. Britain produces only about half of her own sugar needs.

If the cuts go ahead, they will cause about 2,500 redundancies in British Sugar Corporation and the closure of eight factories.

“Sugar beet is very much an anchor for the farmers who grow it, " said Lincolnshire National Farmers Union vice chairman, Mr Peter Addison, of Riby, South Humberside.

“And livestock farmers are also very much reliant upon it for pulp and beet tops to use as feed.”

The cut in acreage would be a criminal waste of money, he said. “We have tooled ourselves up with the most efficient means of harvesting, and British Sugar have spent millions of pounds on rejuvenating their factories.

The National Farmers Union County Secretary, Mr Newton Loynes, said the EEC commissions plans would mean that Britain could produce only 35 percent of the country's needs, – “and I can't see us importing sugar from whatever source as cheaply as we can produce it at home.”

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Big Beet Crop Nets £30m for Cambs Growers.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, March the 3rd, 1980.

Cambridgeshire beet growers and others on the county borders, received more than thirty million pounds for their crops during the last campaign, it was disclosed at the weekend.

And prospects for the forthcoming season are hopeful, if anything like the same conditions prevail to produce the outstanding crops of last year, after a row of disappointing seasons in the mid 1970’s.

But the regional director, Mr Don Tidy, said the current wrangle over proposed Common Market cuts in the UK acreage was casting a shadow over the future.

“We are the lowest cost producers, " he pointed out, at a press conference in Bury. “Beet is grown on light land here, which wouldn't be grown at all if it was on the continent. It is still more profitable than barley.”

Exceptional.

Mr Tidy rebutted farmers' criticisms that the crop was not worth growing, by pointing out that the acreage in hand was already the same as last year. Some farmers had stopped growing the crop, but others had decided to fill the gap.

The area's main factory at Ely, –which employs more than 330 people, did exceptionally well last year.

However, it was not possible to make comparisons with the previous year, when many crops were moved round the region to make full use of the processing capacity, and Bury was coping with teething troubles after the £20 million factory expansion.

A total of 61,400 tonnes of raw sugar produced 58,000 tonnes of white sugar, and there were 38,000 tonnes of pulp, mainly used in animal feed.

Growers received £11 million, compared with £19.1 million in the Bury area, and £5.8 million in the Felsted factory area, which handled crops from South Cambridgeshire and northern Essex.

Wet spring.

Altogether, the Eastern Regions five factories produced 355,300 tonnes, with an average of 36.38 tonnes per hectare.

This was higher than expected, –following late drilling due to the wet spring. Improved weather conditions late in the year boosted crop performance.

A higher-than-average sugar content of 17.27 percent, gave a sugar yield of 6.2 tonnes per hectare. As a result, the average total return for growers will be more than £1,000 per hectare, including the transport allowance.

The total area of sugar beet harvested in the region was 66,000 hectares, grown by more than 4,000 farmers.

Altogether, payments to growers in the eastern region will total more than £68 million.

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Sugar Beet Farmers Set Record.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, March the 5th, 1980.

The 1979 sugar beet crop, processed at the five factories in British Sugar's Southern Region, produced 355,200 tonnes of white sugar, –including 102,800 tonnes at the Bury Saint Edmunds factory, and 58,000 at Ely.

The national total is well over one million tonnes for the second consecutive year.

Average yield for the region is 36.38 tonnes per hectare was higher than first expected, – following the late drilling of the crop due to the wet Spring, – because improved weather conditions later in the year boosted crop performance.

In the Ely area, the yield was higher than average, 38.56 tonnes per hectare, and slightly lower for Bury, at 36.11.

A higher-than-average sugar content of 17.27 percent gave a sugar yield of 6.2 tonnes per hectare.

As a result, the average total return for growers will be more than £1,000 per hectare, including the transport allowance.

Clean.

The total area of sugar beet harvested in the region was 66,000 hectares, grown by more than 4,000 farmers.

Total payment to these growers will amount to more than £68,000,000, including £19.1 million to Bury area growers, and £11 million to those in the Ely area.

Despite late drilling, the crop was quickly established, and developed unhindered by any major pest or disease problems throughout the growing season.

An open autumn enabled the crop to continue growing well late into the year, and harvesting conditions were generally good.

Beets were delivered in a good, clean, sound condition, and regular supplies to all factories were maintained throughout the campaign.

Record.

During the early part of the campaign, Bury Saint Edmunds factory was commissioning new plant, following a modernisation and expansion programmes.

Once initial teething problems had been overcome, the factory sliced to its potential, and set new daily slicing records, –a top figure of 9,200 tonnes.

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Cambs farmer elected to National Farmers Union hot seat.

The Cambridge Evening News, Saturday, March the 22nd, 1980.

A Cambridgeshire farmer has been elected chairman of the influential National Farmers Union Sugar beet committee.

Mr. David Morbey, who farms more than 2,000 acres as managing director of Cole Ambrose, at Stuntney, near Ely, is a former chairman of the Isle of Ely Farmers Union, and a member of the great Ouse River Division land drainage committee.

His appointment to the hot seat comes at a time when the future of the sugar beet crop is under fierce scrutiny from the Common Market secretariat in Brussels, which has proposed swingeing cuts in the national acreage.

Cheaper.

The Government has already turned down flat, two schemes which have been proposed, and would lead to the closure of a number of factories, including at Ely.

Sugar beet is in danger of building up to a mountain, similar to those created in butter and beef, but Britain is claiming that the cuts will be far heavier in proportion to those suggested for continental countries.

Mr Morbey is one of the region's bigger growers and has also headed local committees on the crop’s future.

It is claimed that production is far cheaper in Britain, and that any cuts made should be applied evenly across the board.

Another Cambridgeshire farmer, Mr Keith Roberts, of Great Wratting, has been elected to continue as chairman of the pigs committee.

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Now It’s a Sugar Wrangle.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, April the 3rd, 1980.

With the Common Market haggling over the amount of sugar Britain should be allowed to grow in the next 5 years, more than 2,250 Cambridgeshire growers have been getting on with the job of drilling this year's crop.

It is proving a testing time getting it in, since conditions are far from ideal, with growers having to snatch their chances as best they can, between the showers.

It should get in marginally earlier than last year's outstanding crop, but growers are probably more concerned about what is going on in Brussels.

For while the British Sugar Corporation has the capacity to deal with 1.25 million tonnes of sugar from home grown beet, about half the country's requirement, the commission wants to reduce the total sugar output to 1.01 million tonnes, which could put smaller factories like Ely out of business.

But the corporation insists Britain should grow more. Growers agree, and so do the National Union of Agricultural Workers who have many members working at factories taking the region’s crop at Bury, Wissington, Kings Lynn, Peterborough and Felsted.

Both sides are indulging in a lot of sabre-rattling at present. Some kind of horse-trading compromise will probably be reached at the 11th hour. Most European Economic Community disputes seem to end in this fashion, with belated dawn decisions after marathon sessions, but the fact is that the sugar mountain is getting nearly as bad as the butter and beef surpluses.

Farmers locally, though, are very nervous that they could lose out in this kind of atmosphere, for the market is in turmoil with vast overspending on crop support, which can no longer be financed. Something's gotta give!

In the meantime, the men at the grassroots are making the most of what dry weather there is. Typical of the larger growers who are getting ahead, is the former Cambridgeshire National Farmers Union branch chairman, Mr. John Martin, of Waterbeach, whose firm, J H Martin and Sons, (Littleport), Limited, puts nearly a fifth of its 2,700 acres down to sugar beet each year.

Wet weather has slowed the start of drilling, but he has managed to get his first 90 acres in, out of 500 acres.

Laymen might find it hard to believe that the crop is worthwhile, since when the contracts come up for renewal at the end of the year, there are always those who are threatening to drop it altogether in a bid to get the prices raised.

As the drill tracked across the Fen, Mr. Martin saw other virtues, such as fitting in well with the rotation of a Fenland farm. He is committed to a high level of costs, but these have to be offset by growing the highest possible acreage of sugar beet and potatoes.

With the present system, he feels he has the balance right. “We regard farming as a long-term business and are reluctant to make sudden changes in our cropping because of what we consider are short-term political aberrations, " he said.

Last year, the gross return from the crop was £454 per acre.

Dealing with the European Economic Community proposal to cut Britain's sugar production quotas, he said, “Britain is now in a position to produce half its sugar. It is right that it should, and the country's growers should be left to get on with the job.”

“We can grow it as efficiently as anyone in Europe, given a similar price in relation to the cost, and I see no reason why we should be prevented from doing so.”

With other powerful voices in the area, including that of the new chairman of the National Farmers Union sugar beet committee, Mr. David Morbey, of Ely, there is no danger of the argument being lost by default.

After all, the National Farmers Union is widely regarded as the most effective lobby in Britain. The European stage adds a new dimension to the challenge.

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Farm Scene.

The Bury Free Press, Friday, April the 18th, 1980.

Desmond Bradford has been appointed regional director of British Sugar's Southern Region.

He succeeds Mr Don Tidy, who takes over the role of director of special assignments at the company's central offices, until his retirement later this year.

Mr Bradford has control of five factories, –Bury Saint Edmunds, Ely, Cantley, Felsted and Ipswich, –but due to reorganisation, he will also be responsible for Kings Lynn and Wissington.

Mr Bradford joined British Sugar in 1940 as a fieldman and was currently central region director.

In 1956, he was promoted to agriculturist at Ely, becoming general manager at Peterborough and Spalding Factories in 1975. A year later, he took his job with the central region.

Mr Tidy joined British Sugar in 1947, and became general manager and agriculturist at Bury in 1967.

In 1973, he was made general manager for Bury and Ely factories, and was appointed southern region director in 1977.

Photograph and caption on the left:

Caption reads:

The picture shows Mr Bradford, (on the left), with Mr Tidy.

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Prospects Good for the 1980 Beet Crop.

The Newmarket Journal, Thursday, September the 25th, 1980.

British Sugar's provisional opening date for the factories at Bury Saint Edmunds and Ely is September the 30th.

Despite the adverse spring and summer weather conditions, the prospects for a good crop are encouraging, said British sugar executive director, Peter Dyke.

He pointed out that the wet weather had caused excessive weed growth in the crop, which could cause problems at harvest and in the factories.

As a result, all growers have been urged to keep down the amount of weed trash in loads to minimise problems in the factories.

Total.

Last year's crop produced a total of 1.15 million tonnes of white sugar, easily beating British Sugar's 1.04 million tonnes production quota set by the Common Market.

The company bought more than 7.6 million tonnes of beet, which was grown on more than 213,000 hectares and which was worth £214 million to the country's growers.

The crop yielded about 6.1 tonnes of sugar per hectare, compared with 5.81 tonnes the previous year, --the ninth time that the six tonnes barrier has been broken since 1960.

And although the signs are good for the crop which is soon to be harvested, as yet, there are no predictions as to what it will yield.

Shelved.

There was good news for British Sugar during the summer, when it was announced that the European Economic Community proposals to cut back sugar production had been shelved for a year, -- as British Sugar's earlier warnings on the world sugar situation were proved correct.

A world shortage, repeatedly forecast by the company's chief executive John Beckett in the battle against the cuts, appears to be looming ever nearer.

And the price explosion he predicted is already ripping through the world sugar market. The price is around £400 a tonne, and is expected to rise even higher.

Quotas.

The decision to maintain production quotas at their present level for the time being, coupled with the indications of a good British crop is good news for the company, its employees and customers.

For the British housewife, now paying around 34 pence for her 1-kilogram bag of Silver Spoon sugar, would have to find nearer 50 pence if her sugar was supplied from the world market.

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Ely Sugar Beet Plant to Close.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, February the 16th, 1981.

British Sugar is to close its Ely beet processing plant with the loss of more than 300 jobs.

Factories at Felsted, Essex, Selby, Yorkshire and Nottingham will also close.

Today's announcement by the British Sugar Corporation follows a key meeting between the corporation and trade unionists and a meeting of the board, to consider closing the factories in response to Common Market pressure to cut the national crop quota.

It will be a mortal blow to mid-Anglia's economy, for the Ely factory has been at the heart of an important and valuable industry since it opened in 1925.

The beet crop is worth £35,000,000 to farmers, and the factory itself has a permanent staff of about 200, which swells to more than 300 in the processing season.

A total of 750 jobs will be lost at the four factories, and a further 500 temporary jobs are going. Cost of the closure is put at £8.5 million, with a further £14.5 million being written off assets.

British Sugar said the move would reduce its production capacity from more than 1.25 million tonnes a year, to about 1.15 million tonnes.

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Local Factories miss BSC Axe.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, February the 17th, 1981.

The beet sugar factories at Lynn and Wissington have escaped the British Sugar Corporation’s closure plans.

But while they survive, more than 200 workers will lose their jobs at the neighbouring factory at Ely, the British Sugar Corporation announced yesterday.

Farmers who have supplied the Ely factory in the past, are now expected to transfer to Wissington or Lynn for the next campaign, with the British Sugar Corporation paying the extra travel costs.

Built in 1925, Ely is one of the smallest factories in the country, and the only one to produce raw sugar, which then has to be refined further elsewhere.

It is one of four of the corporation's 17 factories which are to close. The others are at Felsted, Essex, Selby, Yorkshire, and Nottingham.

In all, 750 permanent jobs will be lost, together with 500 temporary jobs each year, during the four-month processing campaign.

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Ely Fighting Mortal Blow.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, February the 20th, 1981.

For years, Ely has quietly ticked over as a busy, modestly wealthy community at the heart of the country's richest agricultural hinterland. Now, its serenity has been shattered by an unemployment crisis of unprecedented severity. Our environment correspondent, David Waterson, reports on its ramifications.

A spectre haunts the narrow streets of Ely, and it threatens to turn the ancient Cathedral City into the Cambridgeshire counterpart to Corby, a ghost town struggling to hold disaster at Bay.

The two widely different communities both depend on one industry for their lifeblood. In Corby, it was steel which employed 40 percent of the working population; in Ely, it is agriculture which has provided jobs in ancillary industries for about 45 percent of the local workforce.

The closure of the British Sugar processing plant is a mortal blow, for it is the biggest single employer with 215 permanent jobs plus 130 casual workers employed in the four-month processing “campaigns”.

It seems incredible that after 56 years of playing such a vital part in developing a healthy Fenland agriculture, the factory will be silent while 13 remaining British sugar plants continue to operate.

This tragedy is not the only employment setback Ely has endured in the past few months.

The agricultural recession has caused farmers to buy less machinery. And the knock-on effect of this, has meant the closure of the Dorman Sprayer Company, after being taken over by the Ipswich firm, (Ransome, Sims and Jefferies), with the loss of 90 jobs, and now Standen’s are feeling the cold, shedding 34 out of 150 jobs.

It has swollen the Ely area out of work tally to more than 1,000.

Although the Ely employment area is far larger than the city itself, most jobs are concentrated there, where perhaps 15 percent of the working population are now looking for jobs. The prospects are slim, especially for school leavers and those nearing retirement.

But it is the stark news at the beet factory which has rocked the city to the core. Could the catastrophe have been avoided?

The plant began under Dutch ownership, after the new crop had been introduced into the country in 1925. At that time, beet broadened the cropping pattern, and offered a cheap alternative to cane sugar.

But soon after the war, –by that time it had become part of the British Sugar empire, --there were rumours that it was doomed for closure.

The factory is the only one which handles raw sugar, and it has been starved of investment in new equipment.

While the British Sugar Corporation ploughed millions into modernising plants like Wissington near Downham Market and Bury Saint Edmunds, Ely got a mere £10,000 for refurbishing what has long been regarded as an uneconomic and obsolete plant.

Even so, it is Common Market politicking which has ensured that the Agricultural Minister, Mr Peter Walker, is allowed a total national quota of 1.15 million tonnes, less than the present level of 1.3 million tonnes of sugar.

The reduction, coupled with the prospect that Tate and Lyle, having closed their obsolete Liverpool refinery, will become “a much more competitive animal,” (according to the British Sugar Corporation's chief executive, Mr. John Beckett,) --which left the company with little alternative, but to close Ely, and three other factories to improve efficiency, and get rid of surplus capacity.

All this is of little consolation to Ely which, one suspects, is now the number one unemployment blackspot in the county.

The secretary of the Cambridgeshire Farmers Union, Mr Derek Crawley, sees little chance of persuading the British Sugar Corporation to change its mind.

“This is a terrible development for the employees involved, although the writing has been on the wall for a long time, because there has been little investment in developing the factory to meet modern needs.”

The British Sugar Corporation has been unable to do much about extending the plant, because it is jammed between the railway line and the river, with little room for modernisation.

This was the perfect place when it was founded 56 years ago, for much of the crop came in by rail or barge. The decline in both has meant that the burgeoning road traffic has been a recurring sore in a close-knit community with roads ill equipped to take the burden.

Representatives of farmers interests are expecting to meet the British Sugar Corporation officials later this month to thrash out alternative transport arrangements for Wissington and Bury Saint Edmunds, which will be taking the bulk of the crop from the Fens.

Growers will get full transport compensation for the first year, but there is likely to be some haggling over the allowance thereafter.

Their difficulties, however, pale into insignificance against those of the workforce.

Four unions represent the staff. The National Union of Agricultural Workers represents the lion's share of the 90 process workers, with the Electrical Trades Union, the Transport and General Workers and the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers also involved.

The most they can hope for, is good redundancy terms. The longest serving workers, just short of the early retirement candidates, will get more than £8,000, but a union official said that the majority were younger people who will have difficulty in getting other work.

A few staff will be transferred, but for the remainder, the prospects are bleak, as there are only 36 vacancies in the Ely employment area, and not much more anywhere else.

The Isle’s Liberal MP Mr Clement Freud is right to conclude there is little chance of Government aid for the area, when far bigger industrial communities with Conservative members, have also drawn a blank.

So, the best that can be hoped for, is that some will get a handsome enough pay-off, to venture into small business on their own account.

All is not doom and despondency, however. The local council should now accelerate plans for shopping development in the city to soften the blow.

In engineering, there are already intriguing reports of local initiative; there are indications that two small specialist concerns making agricultural equipment are getting off the ground, using staff made redundant from larger factories in the same field.

The land of that legendary hero, Hereward the Wake, has long been known for its pride and independent spirit. These are just the qualities which are needed to face up to the grim reality now confronting a hitherto unassuming community, urgently needing to come to terms with the pitiable plight, in which it now finds itself.

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Jobs Lost in a Sugar Shake-Up.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Friday, February the 20th, 1981.

The British sugar factory at Ely is one of four to be closed, in plans to streamline sugar production announced this week.

Around 200 workers at the factory will be made redundant and beet will be transferred to other British Sugar Corporation factories at nearby Wissington, Peterborough and Bury Saint Edmunds.

But there has been an assurance that there will be no cutback in the acreage of sugar beet grown this year.

“Farmers, who supply these four factories to close, --including Felsted in Essex, Selby in Yorkshire and Nottingham, --will, in future, be able to deliver the crop to larger neighbouring factories,” the British Sugar Corporation said this week.

“Any additional transport costs will be met this year by British Sugar.”

The closure of Ely and the other three factories does not come as a surprise by any means.

Last year, British Sugar warned that it would have to close even more factories if the European Economic Community was not more generous in its UK quota for sugar production.

And now the British Sugar Corporation chief executive, Mr. John Beckett, blames the four closures on the decision of Agriculture Minister, Peter Walker, to accept a lower sugar quota for next season.

Said Mr Beckett. “The Government wished to see the reduction of the total amount of beet sugar produced by the European Economic Community, and the Minister has made it crystal clear to us, that he would accept a total quota of 1.15 million tonnes, –neither more nor less. Our present quota is 1.326 million tonnes.

“Clearly, in arriving at this figure, the minister has taken into account the 400,000 tonnes drop in the UK sugar market since the mid-1970’s. The annual figure was about 2.7 million tonnes and is now 2.3 million tonnes.”

“This new quota means we have too much production capacity, hence the closure of the four factories. All of which are small and produce relatively high-cost sugar.”

The closures will reduce the corporation's total production capacity from a planned 1.25 million tonnes, to around 1.15 million tonnes.

Altogether, 750 jobs will be lost, and 500 temporary jobs during the four-month processing campaign will also go.

The latest move has, too, to be seen against an overall British sugar policy of concentrating production at a small number of super factories such as Wissington and Bury Saint Edmunds.

These super factories have been expanded very considerably during the past decade at a high investment cost. Now the British Sugar Corporation is reaping the benefit, as these factories come on to full stream.

Even without the latest cut in the UK quota, this policy would have put pressure on the smaller, older, least efficient factories.

Competitive.

Last campaign, for instance, the Ely factory dating back some 55 years, handled 332,000 tonnes of beet, which is less than one-third of the tonnage at Wissington.

In announcing the closures, Mr Beckett drew attention to the need for British sugar to remain highly competitive.

“We are in a very competitive market, facing highly efficient. European Economic Community producers, who have not suffered the effects of the UK's very high inflation rates, " he said.

“Tate and Lyle, once their Liverpool factory is closed, will also become a formidable competitor, with Thames the biggest and potentially the most efficient refinery in the world.

“In the face of this, the way for us to stay competitive and successful and protect the majority of our employees' jobs, is to utilise fully the production capacity of our modernised and bigger factories.”

He said the only way to keep the four doomed factories open would be to persuade farmers to grow a lot more sugar beet.

There would, however, be no guaranteed price for that beet, and with a highly volatile world market, it would be irresponsible to adopt this course.

He pointed out that British Sugar had responded to a government call during the 1970’s to expand UK sugar production, investing £150 million of its own money in expanding and modernising some of its factories.

The corporation now had the capacity to produce more than 1.25 million tonnes of sugar.

But growers had lagged behind production capacity: last year, the area grown was about 210,000 hectares, and for the 1981-2, it would be around the same figure, producing 1.10 to 1.15 million tonnes in an average year.

Mr Beckett added: “The closure of the four factories, hard as it is, will keep British Sugar cost competitive, and so ensure the majority of its factories and jobs, and the continuing success of the company.”

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## Plea to BSC on Plant Closure.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, February the 24th, 1981.

Ely City Council has called on the British Sugar Corporation to reconsider the decision to shut its factory at Queen Adelaide.

Members decided last night to write to the British Sugar Corporation expressing deep concern about the sudden announcement and the effect it will have on employment prospects in the area.

Councillors said that if it was not possible to reopen the factory then the British Sugar Corporation should do its utmost to find an alternative use for the site, to help alleviate hardship to the community.

### Eyesore.

They said they were prepared to meet the British Sugar Corporation at any time to consider alternative uses for the site.

“This is a very serious blow to the city, " said Councillor Mike Rouse. “We should protest to the British Sugar Corporation at the sudden closure of the Ely factory.”

But councillor Alf Pope said the corporation was already doing everything possible to help its employees. “I cannot condemn the British Sugar Corporation. They are doing all they can for Ely, " he said.

Councillor Colonel John Beckett said the big question now was over the future site, and Councillor Alan Mitcham added: "What we don't want to see is an eyesore.”

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## Longer Campaign for Sugar Men?

The Retford, Worksop, Isle of Axholme and Gainsborough News, Friday, February the 27th, 1981.

Lincolnshire and South Humberside sugar beet growers are concerned that the closure of four beet factories will mean a longer campaign.

Growers pressed for many years for a reduction in the campaigns.

“In most European countries they have a short campaign rather than the longer ones we have had in the past,” said Mr David Hill, county National Farmers Union secretary.

Following the closure of four British sugar factories, it looked now as if Britain would be going back to the 120-day campaign.

“We think it is wrong. It is retrograde and shouldn't be allowed to reflect on producers' returns.”

The National Farmers Union’s County branch has passed a resolution urging headquarters to seek an improvement in early and late delivery bonuses.

The closure of British Sugar's, Felsted, Ely, Selby and Nottingham factories has, in a sense, been good news for Lincolnshire and South Humberside.

It has made the future of our Brigg, Spalding and Bardney factories much more secure.

“The workforces at these factories can feel they have got safer jobs, " said a British Sugar spokesman.

So long as Mr Peter Walker obtained the total quota of 1,150,000 tonnes he had promised, there was no chance of any more factories being axed in the foreseeable future, he said.

The closure of the four factories means the loss of 750 jobs. The 500 temporary jobs open each year for the four-month processing season will also go.

But there will be no cut back in beet acreage. Farmers who supply these factories will in future be able to deliver the crop to larger neighbouring factories. And any additional transport costs will be met by British sugar.

The closures reduce the company's total production capacity from a planned 1.25 million tonnes, to around 1.15 million tonnes a year.

Total cost to the company will be about £23 million, of which about £8,500,000 are the closure costs, and the remainder is principally the write off of the company's assets.

Announcing the decision, Mr. John Becket, chief executive, said: “The British Government wished to see the reduction of the total amount of beet sugar produced by the European Economic Community, and the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Peter Walker, has made it crystal clear to us, that he would accept a total quota of 1,150,000 tonnes, –neither more nor less. Our present quota is 1.326 million tonnes.

Mr Beckett continued: “Clearly, in arriving at this figure, the Minister has taken into account the 400,000 tonnes drop in the UK sugar market since the mid-1970’s. The annual figure was about 2,700,000 and now 2,300,000 tonnes.”

“This new quota means we have too much production capacity. Hence the closure of the four factories, all of which are small and produce relatively high-cost sugar.”

Mr Beckett said this was a hard, sad decision to have to make, but the company really had no choice.

“We are in a very competitive market, facing highly efficient European Economic Community producers who have not suffered the effects of the UK's very high inflation rates.”

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Farmers Seek Assurance on Costs.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, March the 4th, 1981.

Farmers want guarantees that the closure of the Ely beet plant will not bring a cut in the transport allowances they are paid for taking beet to and from factories.

Mr. David Morbey, of Ely, chairman of the National Farmers Union sugar beet committee, wants to ensure that the closure will not cost growers anything extra.

Mr Morbey, who farms at Stuntney, and is a former chairman of the Unions County branch, is seeking clarification on the effect of the closure of four factories on 14,000 growers throughout the country.

The 800 growers who, in the past, have sent their crops to the Ely factory could be faced with higher costs, by sending them to factories near Downham Market, Bury or Peterborough, it is feared.

The British Sugar Corporation has said it will not cut the transport allowances, and has given assurances that growers will not be out of pocket when the next processing campaign gets under way in the autumn.

A spokesman for the company said it would stick to the transport allowance formula, and part of the financial provisions for the closures included money set aside to pay farmers for additional mileage.

Mr Morbey said growers were unhappy at suggestions they had not planted enough, and the union would seek fairer prices.

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South African Offers to Buy Beet Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Tuesday, March the 17th, 1981.

An adventurous businessman has offered to buy Ely's doomed sugar beet factory to take lock, stock and barrel to South Africa.

Not only does he want the Ely factory, but he wants to buy up all five factories which have been closed by the British Sugar Corporation.

The offer came from Mr G G Beale, who wrote to the British Sugar Corporation saying that he was promoting a "venture capital" company in South Africa, which would process cane sugar on a large scale.

He sent a copy of the letter to the Mayor of Ely, Mr Les Cornwell, asking him to pass on the information to any union officials.

At a meeting of the City of Ely Council last night, Mr Cornwall said he was surprised by the letter. "It is impossible to tell, just by the letter, whether or not Mr Beale is a crank, " he said.

Officials.

In the letter, Mr Beale, who gives his address as 15, First Street, Stanger, South Africa, says he is an investment expert who feels that using the old plants will benefit the British Sugar Corporation shareholders and "all UK residents."

"I would like the chance to buy the closing factories in total, and bring them here to South Africa to adapt them to cane use, " wrote Mr Beale.

Mr Cornwall said he would pass on the information to union officials at the British Sugar Corporation.

In answer to a city council letter, asking the British Sugar Corporation to reconsider the Ely closure, the British Sugar Corporation chief executive, Mr. John Beckett, said he could offer “no hope of any practicable or economic alternative to the closure.”

Mr Beckett suggested that city council members meet him, “to go through the considerations of the decision.”

He said: “It is not right to be negotiating with the trade unions on the one hand and having other negotiations with local interests on the other.”

Mr Beckett said he was looking into all possible alternative uses for the Ely factory.

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MP’s Join Fight to Save Ely Sugar Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Wednesday, April the 15th, 1981.

Questions are to be asked in Parliament about the fate of Ely beet sugar factory, one of four plants threatened with closure.

Representatives of five unions fighting the British Sugar Corporation plans, yesterday lobbied MPs in an attempt to get the issue debated in the Commons.

Earlier, the unions met the British Sugar Corporation's chief executive, Mr. John Beckett, when they tried to persuade him that the factories were viable.

“However, Mr Beckett stuck to his decision that the four factories should close, " said a local spokesman for the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, Mr Peter Allenson.

“So, we decided to lobby union-sponsored MPs. We saw six of them to get them to table questions in the House.”

Profitable.

“After all, the government has a 24 1/2 percent share in the Corporation, and if they can spend time considering British Leyland and British Steel, then surely they ought to have time to consider the British Sugar Corporation.”

“We are not asking for handouts to bailout the Corporation. It is a profitable concern. What we're talking about is the loss of 750 jobs when there is no need for them to go.”

The union had hoped that A survival plan, drawn up by industrial economists, would have persuaded Mr Beckett to change his mind and reverse the closure decision.

“But he merely thumbed through a 40-page document, and did not seem swayed at all, " said Mr Allenson.

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Bid is Absurd – British Sugar Corporation.

Daily Post Business.

The Liverpool Daily Post, Thursday, April the 23rd, 1981.

The British Sugar Corporation has rejected what it described as an “absurd” new bid approach from commodity traders, S & W Berisford.

The bid values the sugar producer at more than £170 million, compared with about 121 million pounds under a previous offer, which lapsed when the deal was referred to the Monopolies Commission.

The new offer follows a cautious approval for a takeover given last month by Sally Oppenheim's Consumer Affairs department.

Berisford has apparently accepted the terms laid down by the Government which commit it, if the offer is successful, to cease trading in Tate and Lyle products, and to maintain British Sugar as a separate subsidiary, with its own accounts.

But the rebuff from British sugar was swift and sharp yesterday.

“It seems to me to be an absurd offer, " said British Sugar chief executive John Beckett. “The bid is derisory. The board will reject it, and will recommend any shareholder to reject it and retain their shares.”

His company believed there would be no advantage for it, for shareholders or for employees from a takeover, he added.

And he did not expect the Government to accept the offer in respect of its 24 percent stake.

The terms of the latest bid are: £285 cash, or 253 new Berisford ordinary shares, or £285 of floating rate unsecured loan stock 1986, for every 100 British Sugar shares.

Berisford already holds 9.28 percent in the sugar corporation, so that full acceptance of the cash consideration of the bid, would involve a payment of around £155 million.

The commodity trader said it was convinced that the combination of its commercial expertise, and the manufacturing capacity of British sugar, would help the latter to overcome the problems it now faces.

The stock market was clearly disappointed with the offer, valuing each share as it did at 285 to 291 pence when the shares have traded recently well above this price.

Immediate reaction was for the price to fall 14 pence, to 301 pence, but Berresford shares gained 4 pence, to 121 pence.

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Strike Call Over Plan to Close Ely Sugar Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Thursday, April the 23rd, 1981.

The British Sugar Corporation faces the threat of an all-out strike at its 17 factories if it refuses to reconsider the fate of Ely and three other plants.

Workers throughout the British Sugar Corporation are now being balloted on the strike call, and the result should be known next week.

Delegates from each of the British Sugar Corporations factories met at Peterborough over Easter, to consider the plans to close Ely, Felsted, Nottingham and Selby.

They decided to recommend an all-out strike unless the British Sugar Corporation withdraws the closure notices, and reconsiders the whole shutdown issue by May the 4th.

Results.

“This recommendation has been taken back to all 17 factories, and members are being given time to vote on it, " said the Transport and General Workers Union Cambridgeshire District officer Mr Jim Foskett.

“It will take some time for the results to be known, but we should have a clear idea by next week.”

At Ely, 200 full timers and 130 casuals will lose their jobs if the British Sugar Corporation shuts the city plant, one of its smallest.

The closure announcement, made in February, has already caused a furore in Ely, because the factory is the city's biggest employer.

Mr Foskett said if it closed, the effect on Ely would be dramatic. There was little prospect of alternative jobs for the redundant workers and the closure would hit the whole community.

People would have less to spend in the shops, and ratepayers would inevitably face a hefty increase if the District Council lost the British Sugar Corporation’s revenue.

“I fear Ely could well be another Corby. The British Sugar Corporation is part of the life of Ely,” he said.

Mr Foskett said the union's industrial economists had come up with a viable alternative, which the British Sugar Corporation's chief executive, Mr. John Becket, had dismissed.

Diversification to cane sugar production could keep the factory going, he said.

Profit.

“The whole problem is that Ely has lagged behind in investment. While much has been spent at Wissington and Bury, only 2 million pounds has been spent at Ely during 1975 and 1980.”

“The British Sugar Corporation is a profitable concern. It has no need to close these factories. Its sole aim seems to be to make a bigger profit.”

The spokesman at the British Sugar Corporations Peterborough headquarters declined to comment until the outcome of the ballot was known.

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Sugar Bid Fails.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, April the 24th, 1981.

British Sugar, which is planning to close its Ely factory, has turned down a takeover bid by the city commodity dealers, S and W Berisford, Limited.

It has told shareholders that the bid, first made in May last year, makes no sense for anyone in the industry.

However, the Government has said it is prepared to consider selling its 14.5 million shares, (24.1 percent of the share-holding).

Further turmoil is expected, as efforts to take over the monopoly beet processing corporation are renewed.

Employees throughout the 17 factories are being balloted by the unions, on proposals to stage an all-out strike against the plans to close Ely and three other factories, with the loss of more than 1,000 jobs. at Ely, more than 240 permanent jobs are at risk.

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Cambs Farmers Attack Closure of Beet Factory.

The Cambridge Evening News, Saturday, April the 25th, 1981.

After holding their fire for more than two months, Cambridgeshire farmers have strongly criticised the closure of the Ely beet sugar factory.

The farmers' belated support for saving the factory is expected to be a powerful fillip to opponents of the closure, who want to save more than 240 permanent jobs in Ely.

Explaining the delay, the county National Farmers Union secretary, Mr Derek Crawley, said, that with the decision to close four factories in the country, it was necessary to carefully consider the ability of the remaining factories to process the additional beet.

Increase.

This meant studying figures from both the British Sugar Corporation and the union. But now the county’s sugar beet committee had concluded there was a strong case to preserve one factory, at least in the short-term, to enable the corporation to prove its ability to handle the crop with the extra slicing involved.

Trends in growers’ cropping policies in different areas, showed an increase in the crop in the eastern counties.

A slight reduction elsewhere, together with the location of alternative factories, indicated that the Ely factory should be retained.

The county's 4,000-strong branch is now making representations to the corporation, as a final decision is expected shortly.

All the unions are against the closure, and there is to be a ballot of the entire union membership in all 17 British Sugar Corporation factories on whether there should be an all-out strike in favour of keeping the factories open.

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Sugar Corporation in Major Effort to Remain Independent.

The Lynn News & Advertiser, Tuesday, April the 28th, 1981.

The battle for control of British Sugar, the giant corporation with factories at both Lynn and Wissington, is hotting up.

International commodity traders S & W Berisford, renewed its take-over bid last week, with an offer which values the Peterborough based corporation at more than £150 million.

But British Sugar has described the bid as “derisory," and is redoubling its efforts to remain independent.

Making the battle ever more complicated, is the mounting opposition which the corporation faces from trade unions, and now local farmers, –to its plans to close 4 factories including Ely.

Berisford made an initial take-over bid almost a year ago, but this was shelved while the Monopolies and Mergers Commission carried out an investigation into the move.

The report gave the take-over the go-ahead, despite finding that it would not benefit the public, –and indeed could be against public interest if certain conditions were not met.

The conditions required Berisford to continue British Sugar as a separate company and to cease trading in sugar from Tate and Lyle, which produces sugar from refining imported cane.

Berisford said it would comply with these conditions, and stepped in last week with an offer for the British Sugar Corporation shareholders, –either £285 cash for every 100, 50 pence shares, or 253 new Berisford 25 pence shares, or £285 Berisford loan stock.

On news of the bid, the British Sugar Corporation shares gained 9 pence, to 310 pence.

Crucial to the success of the bid will be the fate of the Government's 24 percent shareholding in British sugar.

The Government is apparently prepared to consider selling its shares “to a suitable party or parties”, and will consider any bid or bids “on their merits”.

Through the shareholding, the Government has maintained a firm interest in the British Sugar Corporation affairs, and indeed the chairman, Sir Gerald Thorley, who lives at Bale, near Fakenham, is nominated by it.

The British Sugar Corporation plans to close four sugar factories are caused by a restriction on UK production by the European Economic Community, and also by expansion of other factories, where sugar can now be produced more cheaply than at outdated plants such as Ely.

Stake.

Yet Berisford say it intends to expand sugar production by selling surplus on the world markets. As international commodity brokers, it regards itself as in the ideal position to do this.

British Sugar claims that the bid “makes no sense for customers, employees, farmers or shareholders”, –something which it has maintained consistently throughout.

In a letter to shareholders, Sir Gerald says that the Berisford bid undervalues the corporation by 7.6 to 9.5 percent, and urges them to reject the terms.

Sir Gerald adds that following the announcement of the bid, British Sugar has ascertained that the Government has given no indication of any intention to accept the offer for its stake in the corporation.

Meanwhile, Fenland farmers have joined trade unions at British Sugar Corporation, in condemning the closure of the Ely factory.

In a statement last week, Mr Derek Crawley, county secretary of the National Farmers Union in Cambridgeshire, said they had considered carefully the ability of the remaining factories to process the beet normally handled by the four doomed factories.

“We believe there is a strong case to preserve one factory, at least in the short term, to enable the British Sugar Corporation to prove its slicing ability.

“Trends in growers cropping policies in different areas, which reveal an increase in the crop in the Eastern Counties and a slight reduction elsewhere, together with the location of alternative factories, indicate the factory to be retained should be Ely.”

The National Farmers Union County branch is making strong representations to the British Sugar Corporation, as a final decision on the closures is expected shortly.

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MP in Call for Ely Jobs Promise.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, May the 11th, 1981.

A parliamentary bid to save the Ely beet sugar factory, –and three others which are also facing closure, –seems unlikely to succeed.

The attempt is being led by the Labour MP for Ealing, Southall, Mr Sidney Bidwell, who called on the trade Secretary, Mr. John Biffen, to try to get an undertaking that the factories would not be closed.

The other three factories are at Nottingham, Selby, and Felsted, near Dunmow.

Mr Bidwell pointed out to Mr Biffen that there was a takeover battle in progress for British Sugar, which owns the factories.

He said S and W Berisford, the city commodity group which is making the bid, should be asked to give an undertaking that the factories would be kept open, and that there would be no staff cuts.

But he was told that the Minister does not have the power to seek that sort of undertaking.

The decision to close the Ely factory will throw 240 full-time employees out of work.

Another 100 part-timers will also lose their jobs. The first layoffs are expected later this month.

Normally, maintenance work would be carried out in the summer months in time for the next beet processing campaign to start in the autumn.

The talks over the future ownership of British Sugar are likely to continue well into the summer, and it is thought unlikely that there will be any undertakings given in the meantime about the factory staying open.

If Berisford is successful, it is expected to review the whole enterprise once it is in control.

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Light Industry Plan for Ely Sugar Plant.

The Cambridge Evening News, Friday, June the 5th, 1981.

The abandoned 100- acre Ely Beet sugar factory site may be developed for light industry.

But this is only one of several options being considered, as the British Sugar Corporation holds talks with the Cambridgeshire County Council.

The future is still undecided, but at top-ranking British Sugar Corporation management spokesman, and former manager of the Ely factory, Mr Desmond Bradford, said that the corporation was anxious to ensure that it got a good price for the site, and that it was developed to the best advantage of the neighbourhood.

No deadlines have been fixed for settling the fate of the site, and a lot of work has to be done on dismantling the factory, opened 56 years ago.

Most of the machinery and equipment is old, and will be sold for scrap, while more modern equipment will be held as spares, or distributed to the remaining 13 factories.

Mr Bradford pointed out that nearly 50 acres on the opposite side of the river to the main plant was poorly drained, and would need some tidying up before it could be put on the market.

“Ely was one of the first plants in the country, and it is sad that it has had to be axed, " he said. “But we have got to have the best organisation possible to meet foreign competition.”

Since leaving Ely nine years ago, he has held several management posts, and is currently the agricultural services manager.

Factory’s club could open to city.

One of the best-equipped social amenities in the Ely area may be offered to the community following the closure of the beet sugar factory.

Its Sports and Social club, complete with a large hall, bowls green and tennis courts, could be offered to the city as a going concern.

But the arrangement under which this can be done is still uncertain. A former manager of the Ely factory, Mr Desmond Bradford, now one of top executives in the Sugar Corporation, said that it was considered important to retain the facilities, which could be of great value to the community.

“This club offers excellent facilities and we want to see it continue to be used along the present lines but for the benefit of the area as a whole, " he said.

“We hope that we can find a solution which will please everyone in the area.”

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British Sugar Sweat Out Final Hours.

Berisford struggling to clinch control.

The Scotsman, Wednesday, July the 1st, 1981.

There was not a single British sugar share on offer in the stock market yesterday as the last tantalising hours of the £200 million bid by the commodity traders, S & W Berisford, for the company, were whittled away towards today's 3:00 PM expiry time.

On Monday, County Bank, acting on behalf of a Berisford subsidiary, barely managed to mop up 3,600 British Sugar shares in the market at 335 pence each.

With Berisford just 3 percent, or 2 million shares, short of victory, the becalmed state of the market would suggest that, of those uncommitted British Sugar shareholders left, there are few, if any, who want to sell at this late stage to Berisford. There is still, of course, the temptation of Berisford's share alternative offer, which values each British Sugar Corporation share, way above the cash offer and the market price of about 370 pence.

But the balance of feeling in the stock market was that British sugar, led by Sir Gerald Thorley, will pull through with their closely guarded independence intact. If this occurs, will it not be something of a Pyrrhic victory for the British Sugar Corporation directors?

Berisford will be left sitting on a shareholding of nearly 40 percent. At the same time, the Government have a stake of 24 percent, which they have said they want to sell for cash as quickly as possible.

Potentially, then, there will be rather more than 60 percent of the British Sugar Corporation shares waiting for buyers if Berisford lose. This is bound to have a severely depressing effect on the market price of the shares.

The British Sugar Corporation's financial advisors are still confident that they can place the Government's stake with investors at a price close to Berisford's cash offer.

They do not know about Berisford's stake, and neither do Berisford, who reckon that what they will do if they lose is a hypothetical question.

There is no doubt that, from the start, Berisford's bid and stake-building in the British Sugar Corporation has been extremely astute. Their gamble in spending millions in the stock market in pursuit of a bid they might lose was always a bit like tossing a double-headed coin.

It is reckoned that the cost of the money Berisford borrowed to build up their stake in the British Sugar Corporation will be almost entirely covered by dividend income on the stake, so Berisford could quite happily sit on the shares until they are allowed to mount a new bid in a year's time. It wouldn't cost them a penny.

They could also sell and realise a small profit. Many of the shares they own were bought at substantially lower prices than the British Sugar Corporation stand at now.

The average buying price of the stake of nearly 40 percent was about £3 each. Today's market price equals the bid price at 335 pence cash.

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Rain Boosts hopes of Good Sugar Beet Crop.

The Cambridge Evening News, Monday, September the 14th. 1981.

The recent much needed rain has boosted hopes for the county's £30,000,000 sugar beet crop. Expectations were high before the rain, and farmers believe it will ensure the crop is well above average.

With the closure of the Ely factory after 50 years, all the beet grown locally will for the first time be going to either Wissington near Downham Market, Kings Lynn, Peterborough, Felsted near Dunmow, or Bury Saint Edmunds. (Felsted closed at the same time as Ely, so the mention of this factory in this article is a mistake)

British Sugar has announced an early start and all these factories will be opening before the end of the month.

The early start has been made possible by the sunshine which has matured the crop early, the quick completion of factory maintenance programmes and the well-advanced cereal harvest, which gives farmers the chance to move into other crops sooner than usual.

A former Ely factory manager, who is now the British Sugar Corporation agricultural services director, Mr Desmond Bradford, thought the progress elsewhere would mean growers could deliver sufficient beet to ensure a smooth and rapid build up to capacity working, at the factories.

“Despite erratic early season weather, the prospects for a good crop are encouraging, " He said. Widespread rain, along with late sunshine, had provided an ideal boost.

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Below are two reproductions of British Sugar Corporation publications.

The first is How SUGAR is made, followed by, A Visitors Guide on a Factory tour.

How SUGAR is made.

A DIAGRAM of the interior of a home-grown sugar factory.

A DESCRIPTION of the manufacturing process.

A MAP showing where the sugar beet crop is grown and where the factories are located.

## What is sugar?

Sugars, for there are more than one, belong to a group of compounds known as carbohydrates because they are formed of carbon united with hydrogen and oxygen, the last two being in the same proportions as in water. Each sugar has a different formula; but the same sugar, no matter what its source, always has the same formula.

The sugar in milk is lactose; in grapes glucose; and so on. The particular sugar sold by the grocer is sucrose. Its formula is always $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$. It is produced by and extracted from plants, of which the sugar beet and the sugar cane are the most important. The former grows in temperate and the latter in tropical climates.

Sugar from both sources is sucrose, with the formula stated above, and when refined it is impossible to tell from which plant it has come. Sugar is therefore used indiscriminately in commerce without regard to its origin.

## How is it made?

Beet and cane are ‘factories’ in themselves. The plant takes in carbon through the leaves in the form of carbon dioxide, and hydrogen and oxygen in the form of water through the roots. Then, through the agency of the sun, the green colouring matter in the leaves, (chlorophyll) unites the water and carbon dioxide to form sugar. This process is known as photosynthesis.

The plants store the sugar for their own use. The function of the home-grown sugar factory is to extract and refine it for the use of Man.

The green foliage and crowns or tops are removed on the farm, where they are available for use as cattle feed, and only the root portion of the plant reaches the factory.

Sugar beets entering from the large concrete storage bins outside are first of all washed to remove adhering soil and other foreign matter.

Next, they are elevated to the top of the building where they are weighed in order to provide a record of the quantity of clean beet entering the process hour by hour.

The beets then pass to slicers in which they are cut into thin strips of V-shaped section. These pass to the diffusion station where equipment of varying types is used to extract the sugar-laden juice. This is done by allowing the strips to come into contact with hot water, when the sugar diffuses through the cell members into the surrounding water. Some impurities, too, become dissolved in this way and are removed at a later stage.

Reference is made on another page to what happens to the spent strips, or slices.

From the diffusers, the raw juice, as it is called, is pumped into large tanks where it is mixed with quicklime and where carbon dioxide is passed through it. The quicklime and carbon dioxide required for this process are both produced in lime kilns on the factory site. This

treatment precipitates many impurities, which are filtered away. Now follows a second carbonation with or without lime addition, and the juice is filtered again. It is then treated with sulphur dioxide and again filtered.

The liquor, now known as thin juice, is passed to vessels in which its bulk is greatly reduced by the evaporation of water. The evaporators employed are so devised that the vapour which leaves one vessel is used to heat the next, and so on. This results in a great economy in the use of fuel.

The juice is further boiled and concentrated under vacuum. Vapour from the evaporators is used for this purpose, so that a further economy in fuel is achieved. During this stage of the process small crystals begin to form and grow.

The viscous mass, –known as massecuite, –now flows to a battery of centrifugal machines, inside each of which is a basket of very fine mesh. This is rotated at great speed and the liquid (syrup) portion of the massecuite is spun off.

Only the crystals remain. The pure white sugar now passes into a granulator where it is dried and cooled, ready for bagging or packeting.

The syrup from the centrifugal's is slightly diluted and boiled again, when it will produce raw sugar. This process is repeated a third time. Both these raw sugars are re-boiled with the original juice from the evaporators.

In the meantime, the spent slices, after pressing to remove some of the surplus moisture, are conveyed to large dryers, where the remaining surplus moisture is evaporated.

Sometimes molasses is added to the product, which is known as dried sugar beet pulp. At all factories it is bagged and at some it is also turned out in block form.

Dried sugar beet pulp is a valuable animal feeding stuff, approximately equivalent to oats. Sugar beet growers have a priority claim on supplies.

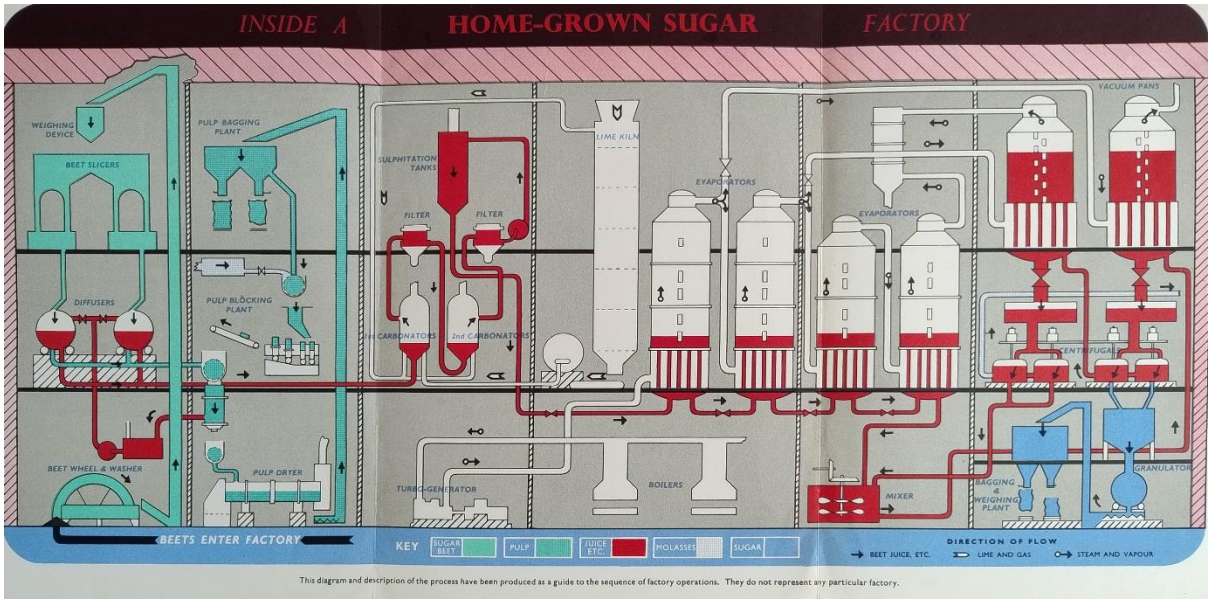
The lime cake which remains on the filters is removed into lagoons, where, after weathering, it loses part of its moisture. It is made available to farmers, for application to the land as a means of correcting soil acidity.

About sugar beet.

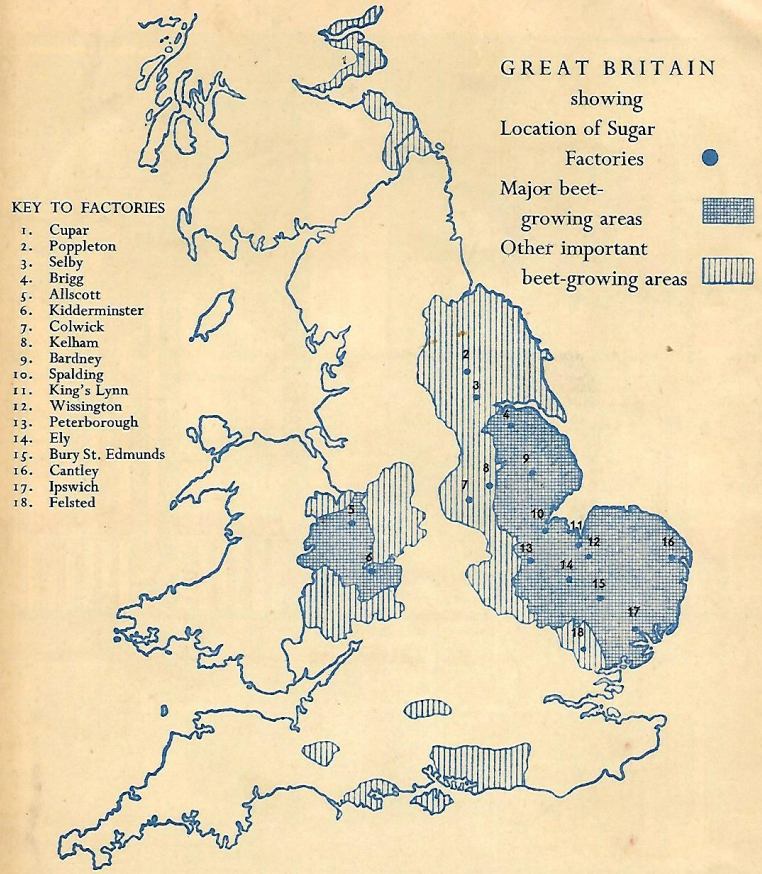
Sugar beet is grown as a cash crop in the root (or fallow) break in the rotation on about 45,000 British farms each year. It has the great advantage for the farmer that, –through its crowns and leaves and the pulp, –it provides the stock food normally produced by feeding roots. The seed is sown in March to May and harvesting commences in mid-September. The manufacturing season lasts from September to the end of the year.

As with all farm crops, the yield varies from season to season, and on average nearly four and a half million tons a year reach the 18 sugar factories.

From this, an average of more than 500,000 tons of white sugar is produced, together with about 300,000 tons of dried sugar beet pulp and 175,000 tons of molasses.




# Where sugar beet is grown and the sugar extracted




KEY TO FACTORIES

1. Cupar
2. Poppleton
3. Selby
4. Brigg
5. Allscott
6. Kidderminster
7. Colwick
8. Kelham
9. Bardney
10. Spalding
11. King's Lynn
12. Wissington
13. Peterborough
14. Ely
15. Bury St. Edmunds
16. Cantley
17. Ipswich
18. Felsted

Designed and produced by
the Information Department of the British Sugar Corporation Limited
134 Piccadilly, London W.1

# BRITISH SUGAR CORPORATION LIMITED

## ELY FACTORY

## ONE OF THE EIGHTEEN FACTORIES IN

## GREAT BRITAIN PRODUCING

## HOME GROWN SUGAR

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ELY FACTORY WELCOME YOU AS VISITORS, AND HOPE YOUR TOUR WILL PROVE BOTH INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE.

* * *

### ACCIDENT PREVENTION

We are very live to our responsibilities with regard to the safety of our employees and our visitors and have a very active safety programme to help prevent any possibility of an accident.

Please remain with your guide at all times and do not stray from the party.

Obey any instructions that may be given with regard to movement around the Factory end exercise care when crossing Company roads and railways.

Sugar extraction is a wet process in the early stages and you are warned to take particular care when walking over wet patches on tiles and concrete floors.

YOU MAY SMOKE UNLESS TOLD NOT TO BY YOUR GUIDE.

D. Bradford,

General Manager/Agriculturist.

. . . . . .

### NOTICE

Visitors tour Ely Sugar Factory at their own risk. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the safety of the individual, British Sugar Corporation Limited cannot be held responsible for any accident, or loss or damage to property, whatsoever, during your time on these premises.

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## ELY FACTORY

The crop for this factory is grown by over 1,900 farmers on 30,000 acres in the Counties of Bedford, Cambs. & Isle of Ely, Hunts, Norfolk, and West Suffolk.

The yield averages between 400,000 and 550,000 tons of beet yearly, (between 1½ and 2¾ tons of sugar per acre).

Delivery is normally by road, that is 550 to 650 lorry loads daily.

All consignments are weighed on arrival and a sample for determination of sugar percent and non-beet material (mostly soil) is taken from each.
This operation is carried out in the presence of a National Farmers Union Representative.

Harvesting and delivery usually extends from late September to the end of January.

The Factory can deal with 4,000 / 4,500 tons of beet per day (three eight-hour shifts) with an output of:

500 to 600 tons of Raw Sugar.

300 to 350 tons of Dried Molassed Pulp Nuts (Cattle Food)

150 to 200 tons of Molasses.

Surplus electricity is sold to the Eastern Electricity Board.

## THE PROCESS

Tipping lorries discharge into SILOS from the ELEVATED ROADWAY.

ROAD ELFA - Other lorries are unloaded by water power, the roots floating in a stream of water along the FLUMES (concrete ducts) to the BEET PUMPS which pump water and beet 50' from ground level to the BEET WASHER or to wet storage in Silos which, together with the "tipping silos" can hold 12,000 tons of beet.
The roots are thoroughly cleaned in the beet washer and then conveyed by scroll and belt conveyor to the BEET HOPPER (capacity 80 tons); next they fall into the CUTTING MILLS or slicers which shred the beet into fine Vee shaped slices (Cossette's); these are weighed in transit on a continuous belt weigher, while being conveyed to the SWIM TROUGH.

From the Swim Trough the Cossette's are flushed by raw juice into the CONTINUOUS DIFFUSER, - a longitudinal drum, divided into 27 compartments, in which sugar is diffused out of the beet slices by hot water(70°C) while they move from one end of the drum to the other in approximately 1½ hours (15-18 revs. per hour). The water is pumped in the reverse direction at twice the speed and emerges from the drum as RAW JUICE.

This diffuser, installed in 1959, is one of the biggest of its kind in the world, and weighs 240 tons.

When dealing with 4,000 tons of beet per 24 hours it contains at any one time, 264 tons of beet and 156 tons of liquid, giving a total weight of 660 tons in all, rotating on 4 trunnions. It is turned by a 110 h.p. motor.

The Cossette's, now called exhausted slices, are conveyed to the PULP PRESSES where much of the moisture is removed. Molasses is added and the mixture passed through the Driers.

PULP DRIERS dry the mixture of Slices and Molasses to about 90% dry matter. It is then passed to the six NUTTING MACHINES - bagged in 1 cwt. Paper sacks, and forms a valuable cattle food "Molassed Sugar Beet Pulp Nuts" (20%-22% Sweetening Matter).

Meanwhile the raw juice from the Diffuser, after further heating, passes to the CARBONATION Tank where Milk of Lime. $Ca(OH)_2$, is added; carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) is next bubbled through the liquid until a precipitate is formed, ($CaCO_3$) combining with it any impurities. This precipitate is allowed to settle in a large cylindrical tank of 40,000 gallons capacity, called a CLARIFIER from where it is removed to the rotating DORR OLIVER VACUUM FILTERS. The material is called Lime Cake or Factory Carbonate of Lime and

in summer can be taken by farmers to correct acidity in their land. Organic impurities from the beet, including Nitrogen, Phosphate and Potash, have a good manurial value.

2nd CARBONATION TANK

The clear settled juice overflows from the clarifier and is again treated with CO2 for further removal of impurities and filtered in the 2nd Filter Presses.

EVAPORATORS

A number of vessels in which the juice is concentrated by boiling in gradual stages from a liquid of 15% sugar to a syrup of 65% sugar. Boiling commences at 128°C, using steam of 30 lbs. pressure and the juice leaves at 65°C under 20" of vacuum.

VACUUM PANS

The syrup is further concentrated by boiling under vacuum until it becomes supersaturated, crystals are encouraged to form and are grown to the required size by the art of the Sugar Boiler. The mixture of syrup and crystals is called massecuite.

CRYSTALLISERS

Large tanks with a stirring gear in which the massecuite is cooled to permit further growth of the crystals.

MIXER

Container for holding massecuite to supply centrifugal machines.

CENTRIFUGALS

Revolving baskets (1000/1500 r.p.m.) which separate sugar crystals from syrup by centrifugal force. After washing, the sugar is discharged through the bottom of the machine, the syrup removed being re-boiled into a lower grade of massecuite which is spun again to separate out the crystals, the final syrup produced being molasses.

SUGAR DRIER

The crystals are cooled and mixed before loading loose into rail trucks or road wagons for immediate dispatch.

DAILY REQUIREMENTS

Coal 280 tons

Limestone 135 tons (Burnt in 2 kilns to produce burnt lime and Carbon Dioxide Gas)

Coke 14 tons

Water 4 million gallons in a closed circuit

POWER

Of the 5,500kw generated hourly by the two Turbo Alternators, 4,250kw per hour, equivalent to the normal amount used by Ely and district, are required to operate the factory, 1,000 to 1,500kw is sold to the Eastern Electricity Board.

The plant runs night and day for 100 to 140 days each season, about 340 people being employed, 66 on each of the 3 shifts plus 140 day workers and office staff.

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Ely factory was built in 1924/25, slicing for the first time on the 14th October, 1925, the average for that Campaign being 822 tons of beet daily. However, the new machinery had settled down by the following year and an average of 1,800 tons per 24 hours was attained. After various improvements, capacity was gradually increased, until just before, and during the war, 2,800 tons was the normal throughput. Some white sugar was produced each year until 1943 after which year increased capacity was considered to be more in the Nations interest, and this was possible if only raw sugar was produced. In 1959 a continuous diffuser replaced the more laborious method of sugar extraction and

the daily slice went up to the present 4,000 tons daily. On two occasions when there have been potato gluts, surplus potatoes have been dried for meal production during the Spring.

BEET RECEPTION

To regulate the intake in 5½ days of the 30,000 tons of beet needed during the 168-hour week, a system is in operation whereby each grower receives a permit for each load of beet he will deliver. Great pains are taken to see that these are so issued that a regular amount of beet leaves each farm weekly according to the acreage and tonnage of beet grown, the position has to be under constant revision to maintain an even flow of about 600 loads daily. A farmer who misses his early permits penalises himself by having to deliver a higher proportion of his crop at the end of the season.

On arrival at the Factory, the lorry driver presents the correct permit, valid for that day only, on this is printed the name and address of the owner of the beet.

An electronic punched card system of recording is used in the Weighbridges and Tarehouses, the system involves the use of a plastic tab called a "Stub Card", which serves as a means of identifying the load and sample. A separate Stub Card is used for each load. Printed on the Stub Card is a serial number and punched holes in it represents that number. When weight, sugar content, etc., have to be recorded the Stub Card is placed in a reader which, when operated passes a signal to a punch machine that registers by means of punched holes in a card the Serial Number and the weight, or other information which is being received direct from the recorder.

The lorry is weighed and, using the Stub Card as identification, the weight is recorded by a punch machine on Card No.1, the Stub Card is then passed to the Driver who then drives to the sampling point, hands his Stub Card to the sampler who takes a sample in the agreed manner (See clause 8 of the Beet Contract).

At Ely the "agreed manner" for taking samples is by the mechanical probe sampler. There are six different sampling positions in the load (see illustration below), and samples are taken in a randomised sequence not under control of the sample taker.

The sample taken weighs about 1½ hundredweights and is then divided into six parts in the "Splitter", one resulting part, accompanied by the Stub Card in a waterproof envelope, is then taken to the Tarehouse and from this point is completely anonymous, each sample being identified by the Stub Card only.

After the lorry has unloaded, either at the Elfa or by tipping from the elevated roadway, it returns to the Weighbridge. The Factory Registration Number displayed on the windscreen identified the lorry; the operator picks up the appropriate cards which include-

a) The permit on which has been hand written the Factory Registration number of the lorry and the number on the Stub Card allotted to this load when weighed in.

b) The punched card from the In bridge recording the Stub Card number, the gross weight, and the lorry number (Card No.1)

c) The Grower's Record Card which gives all the necessary information relating to the Grower delivering the beet.

Card 1 and the Growers Record Card are placed in a reader and the Start button on the weighing machine is pressed, putting the reader and another punch machine into operation. The latter produces a Card No.2 which gives all the information from Card 1 and Growers Record Card, i.e. Stub Card Number, Contract Number, Name of Grower, the Gross weight of the load together with the tare weight, the method of unloading now recorded, and the lorry number. Coupled to the reader is an electronic typewriter which

simultaneously types in duplicate the haulage receipt note, the top copy of which is given to the driver as a receipt for the load.

On both In and Out bridges are electric displays of the weights recorded, which are easily checked with the dial by the driver and the Weighman. It is the driver's responsibility to see that the display weight is the same as that shown on the dial of the machine.

In the Tarehouse - The sample is tipped into the "dirty beet scale" and the weight (in ¼ lb. Units) is recorded remotely on punched card No.3, using the stub Card to identify the sample. the recorded weight is shown on an electric display and is checked with the weight shown on the dial by the N.F.U representative and the operator. (Other N.F.U employees are able to watch Tarehouse activities and carry out check analysis of the samples for sugar content). The sample is next tipped into a Rotary spray washer. The Stub Card travelling on a magnetic reel down to the other end ready to be placed in a reader while the beet are being washed. As the roots appear from the washer they are examined and if necessary re- topped, then placed directly into the clean scale pan where a similar procedure applies as at the "dirty beet scale". When completed, the number, sample weight, number of roots and weight of the tops are recorded on a punch Card No.4. From here the sample travels up an elevator into the multiple saw.

These are seven saws revolving at 480 r.p.m which cut into the beet and remove as "saw dust" a moist mass called "Brei" which after thorough mixing and removal of large pieces is tested for sugar content.

Between 25-27 grammes of the mixed brei are placed on a pan of the Reagent adder which automatically adds the correct proportion of lead acetate and water, depending on the weight of the brei on the pan. The brei and solution are thoroughly mixed in a metal beaker by a mechanical agitator. The mixture is filtered and the clear liquid resulting syphoned into the automatic polarimeter which shows on an electric display the sugar percentage. The Stub Card which has continued to travel with the sample is once more placed in a Stub Card Reader and card No.5 is punched recording the sugar content.

In all, four cards, Numbers,2,3,4 and 5, are needed for each load received; these are forwarded to the Corporation's Central Accounting Department to produce the Grower's advice note and monthly accounts.

On the Grower's Advice Note are shown full details of the load and sample including, Name and Address, Contract Number, Stub Card serial number, Dirt and Top Tares, Sugar Content, Number of Roots in the sample, price per ton and total value of load. This return is despatched to the Grower within four days of the load being delivered.

## OTHER INFORMATION ON THE INDUSTRY

In the past five years, this Factory has processed 2,340,000 tons of beet (received 215,000 tons of soil along with them), produced over 290,000 tons of raw sugar, and about 165,000 tons of molassed pulp.

Payment for beet is made monthly (at the rate of £6 16 shillings and 6 pence per ton in 1968/69, plus or minus 10 shillings per 1% sugar over or under 16%. A deduction of 4 pence per ton is made to defray the cost of the programme of the Research and Education Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, and a like sum is contributed by the Corporation. 2 pence per ton is levied to pay the cost of the Grower's Representatives employed on behalf of farmers by the N.F.U.

The price of dried molassed pulp or Pulp nuts is determined in September in relation to the prevailing price of other feeding stuffs.

The grower of Sugar Beet is able to order up to 1½ hundredweights of pulp for every ton of beet delivered. The price of pulp this winter (1968) is £20 5 shillings and 0 pence per ton ex-Factory.

The white sugar produced by both the British Sugar Corporation and the various refining firms in this country is a 99.97% chemically pure substance known to chemists as sucrose C12 H22 O11 or "Cane Sugar".

The refiners and the Corporation use both sugar from sugar beet and sugar from sugar cane as their raw material. Though naturally, the Corporation's white output is mainly from the beet it processes during the winter months, and cane raws are bought only to make up any deficiency which may occur.

At Ely only raw sugar is produced, (on average 97½% C12 H22 O11) and this is either sold to the refiners for immediate use, sent to other of the Corporation's plants to be refined with their own production, or stored to be refined by them after the beet crop has been dealt with.

Neither humans nor bees, (at least the bees never complain and thrive on either) can differentiate between white sugar produced from sugar cane or from sugar beet unless the humans are able to chemically analyse the minute quantities of other substances present. Extremely specialised methods have to be used, and even then, it would not always be possible to be sure from which plant the sucrose came.

In Great Britain we eat about 116 lbs. of sugar per person per year, mostly in the manufactured food we buy. Nearly 3,000,000 tons of sugar are refined in the British Isles annually, of this, on latest quotas: -

24% will come from the West Indies & Cuba

13% from Mauritius

11% from Australia

8½% from Fiji, British Honduras, Africa & India.

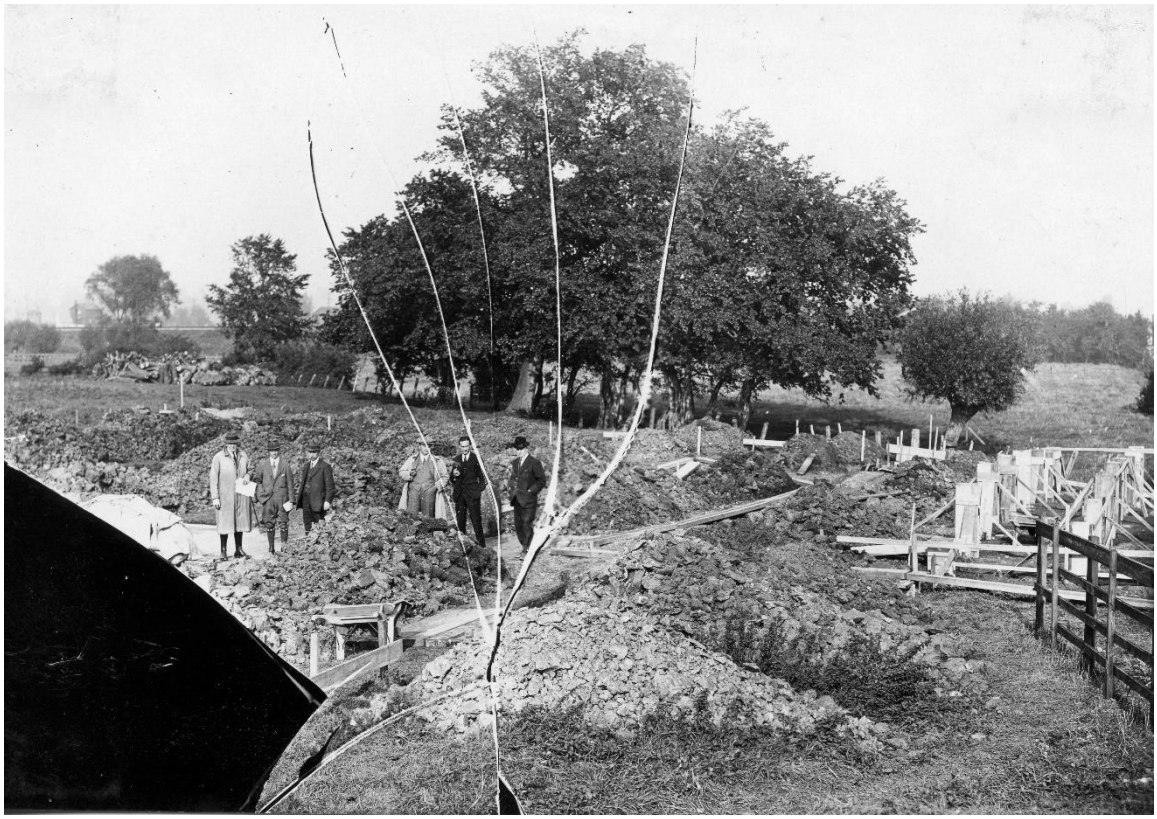
All paid for under the Commonwealth Raw Sugar Agreement at the rate of £43 10 shillings and 0 pence per ton + 30 shillings Colonial certified preference + a special payment for sugar from developing Countries.

31½% will be supplied by the British Beet Sugar Industry, and the remaining 12% will come in at World Market price either "above quota" from Commonwealth Countries or from other suppliers.

The following images were originally taken on glass plate negatives. The pictures were sharper and more detailed using the method of glass plate negatives, as opposed to paper negatives.

Building work on the site started in early October 1924, and the series of following images were taken at intervals during the construction of the site, both inside and outside the main factory buildings. The factory was officially opened on Thursday, October the 15th, 1925.

The first image clearly shows that these glass plates are easily damaged.



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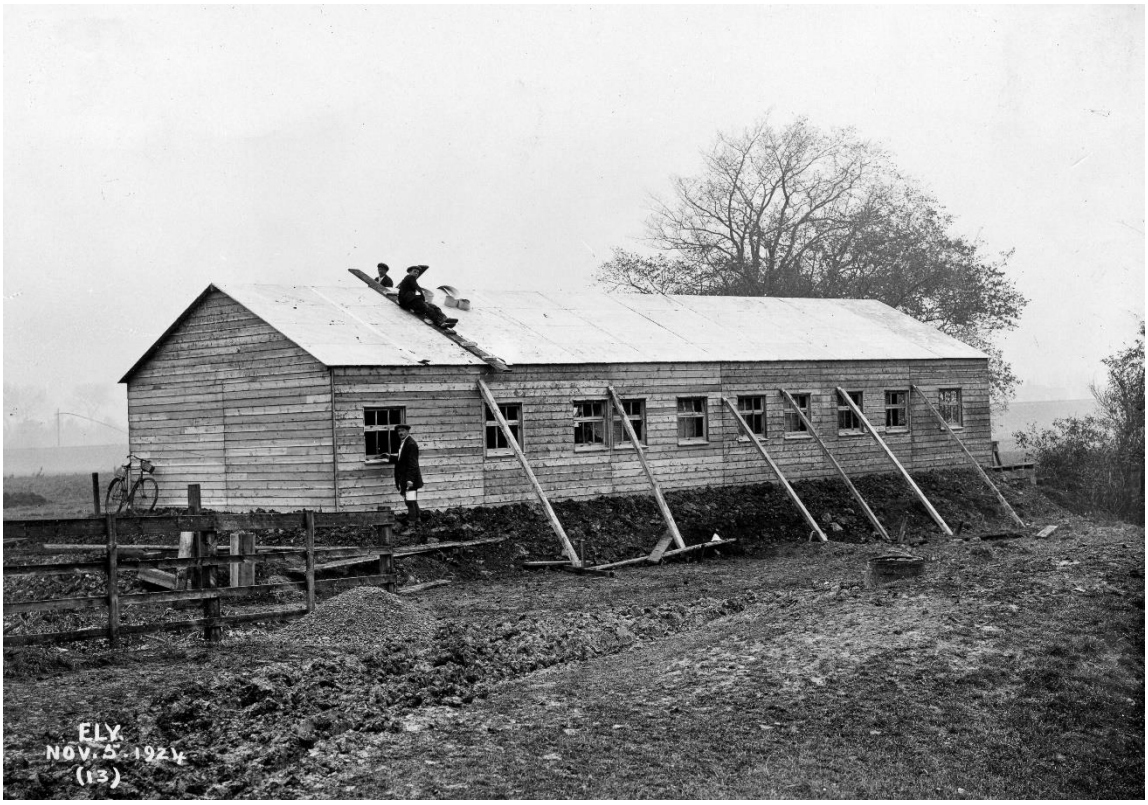
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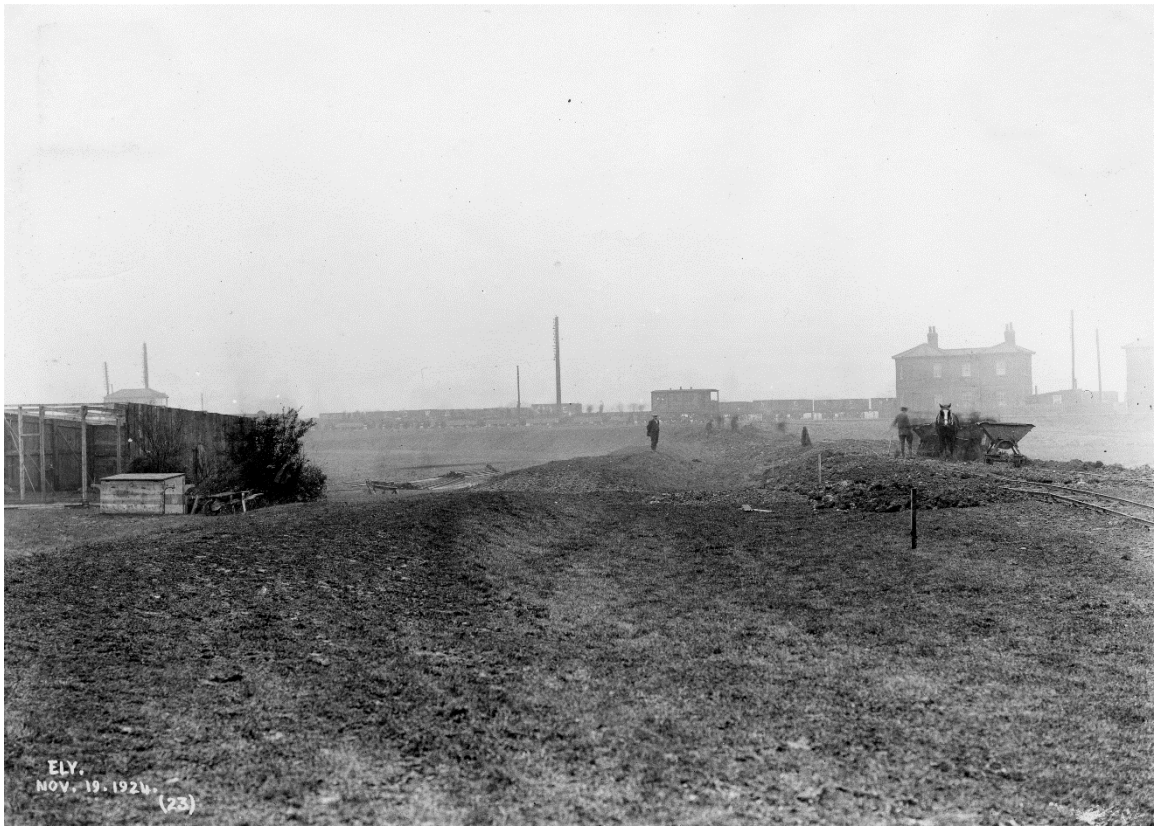
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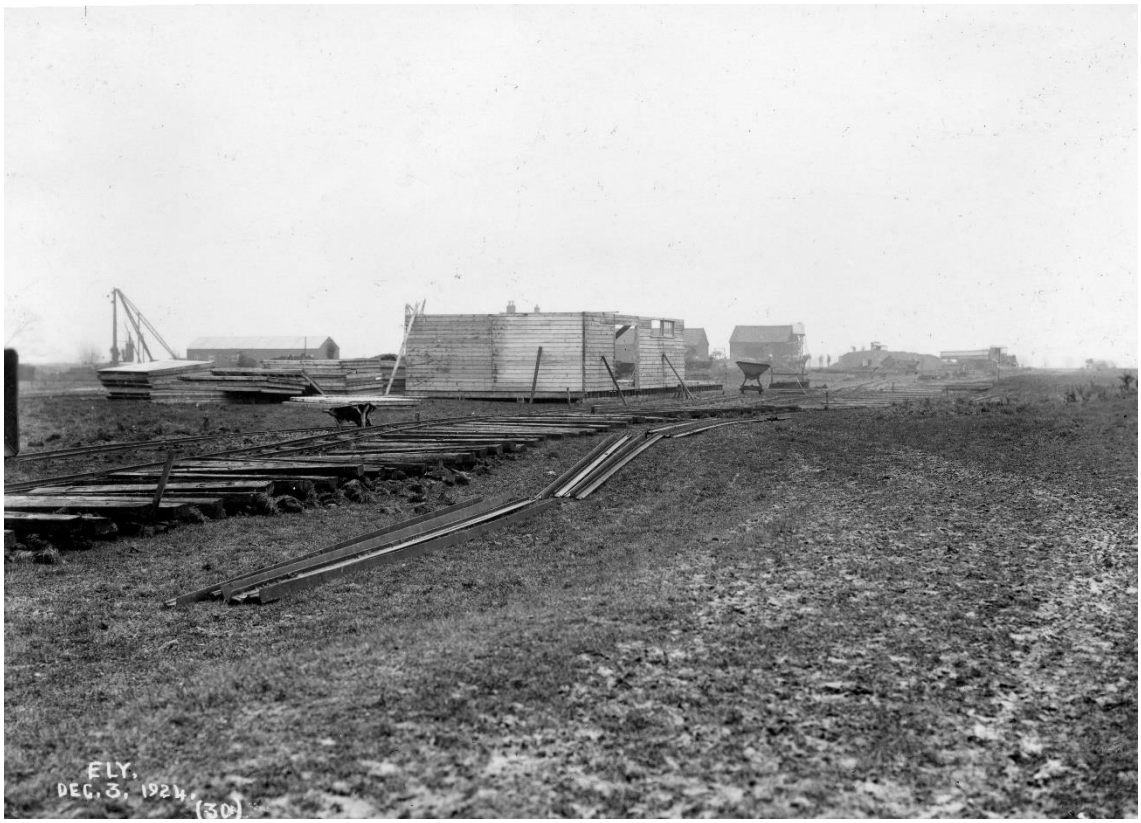
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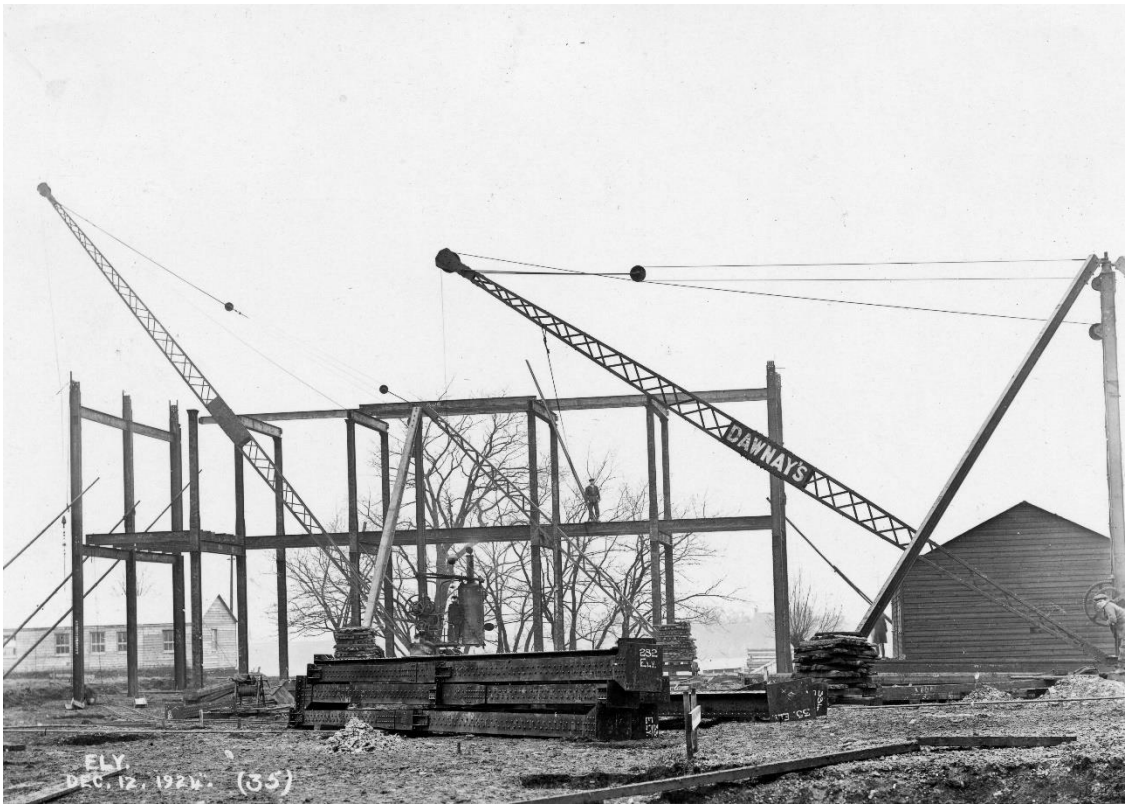
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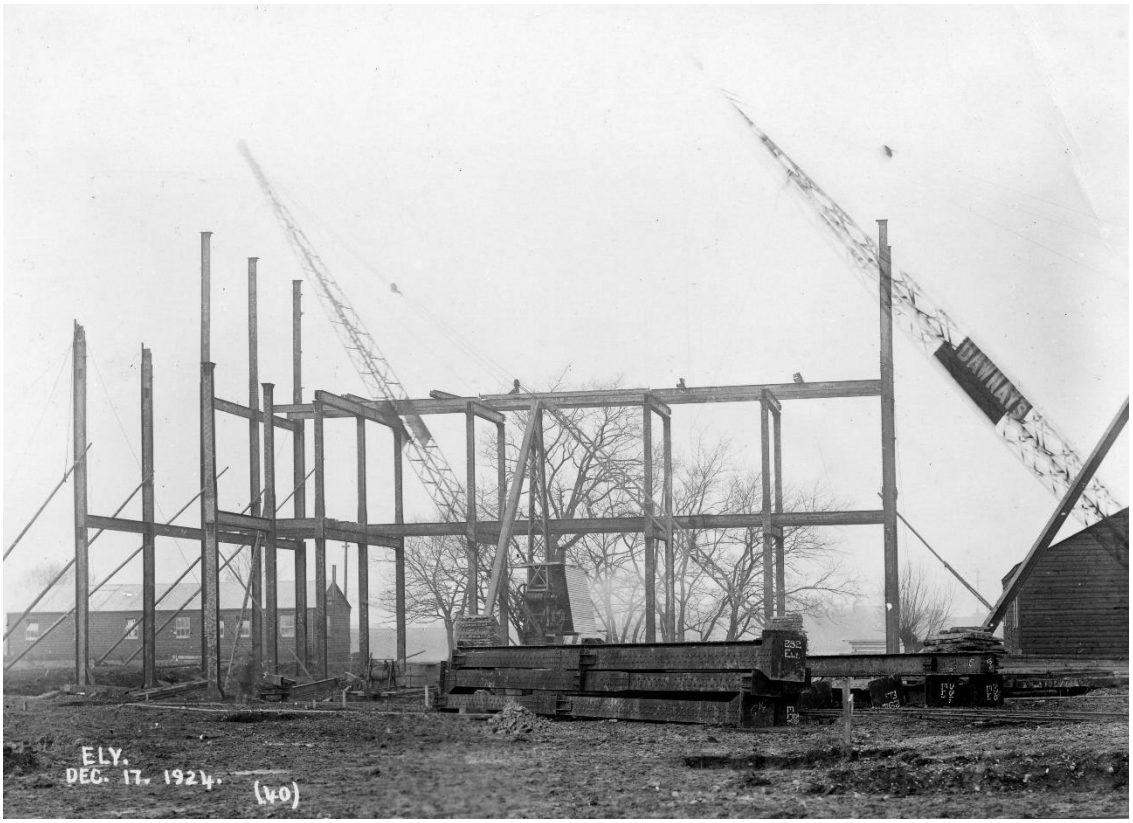
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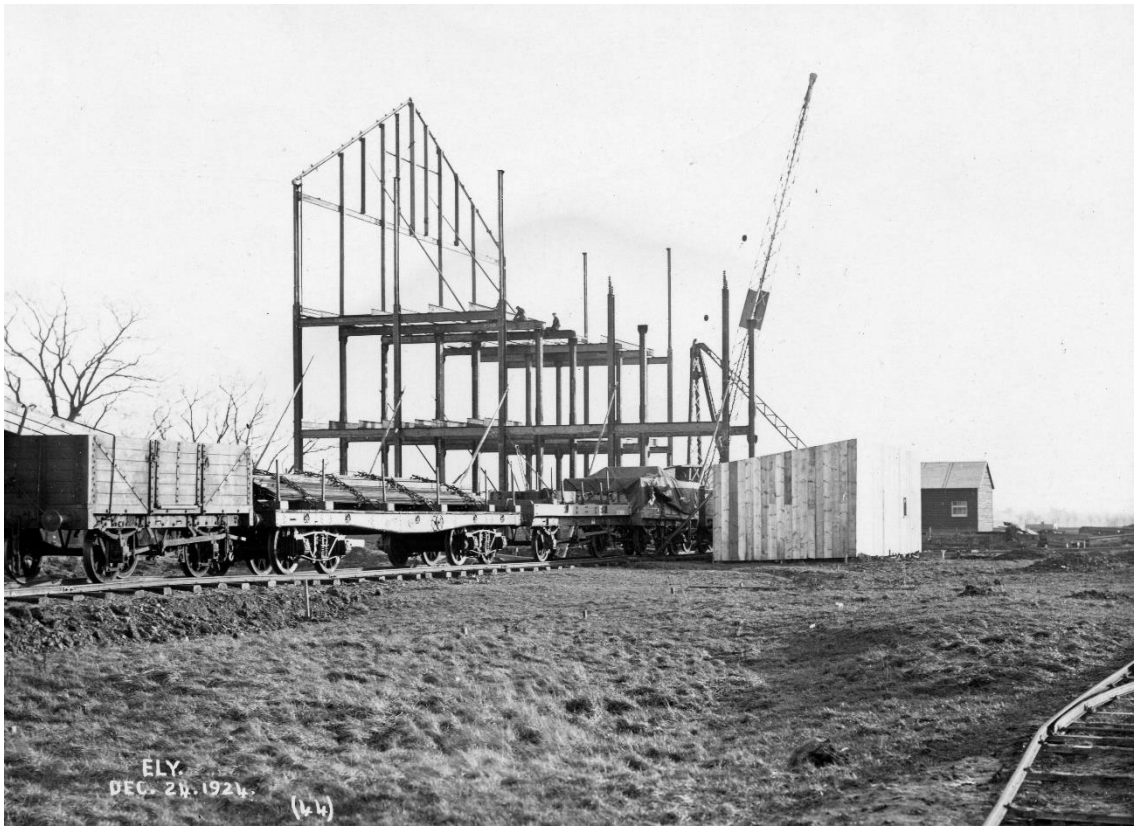
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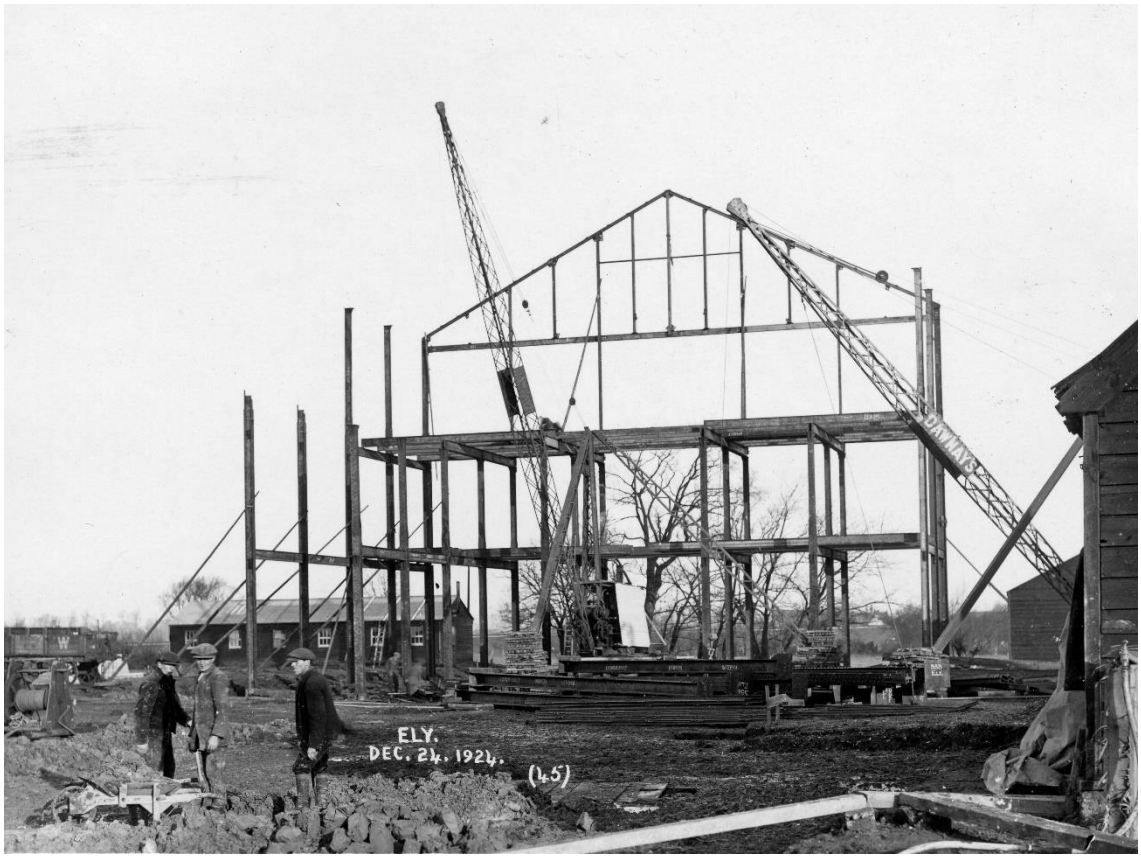
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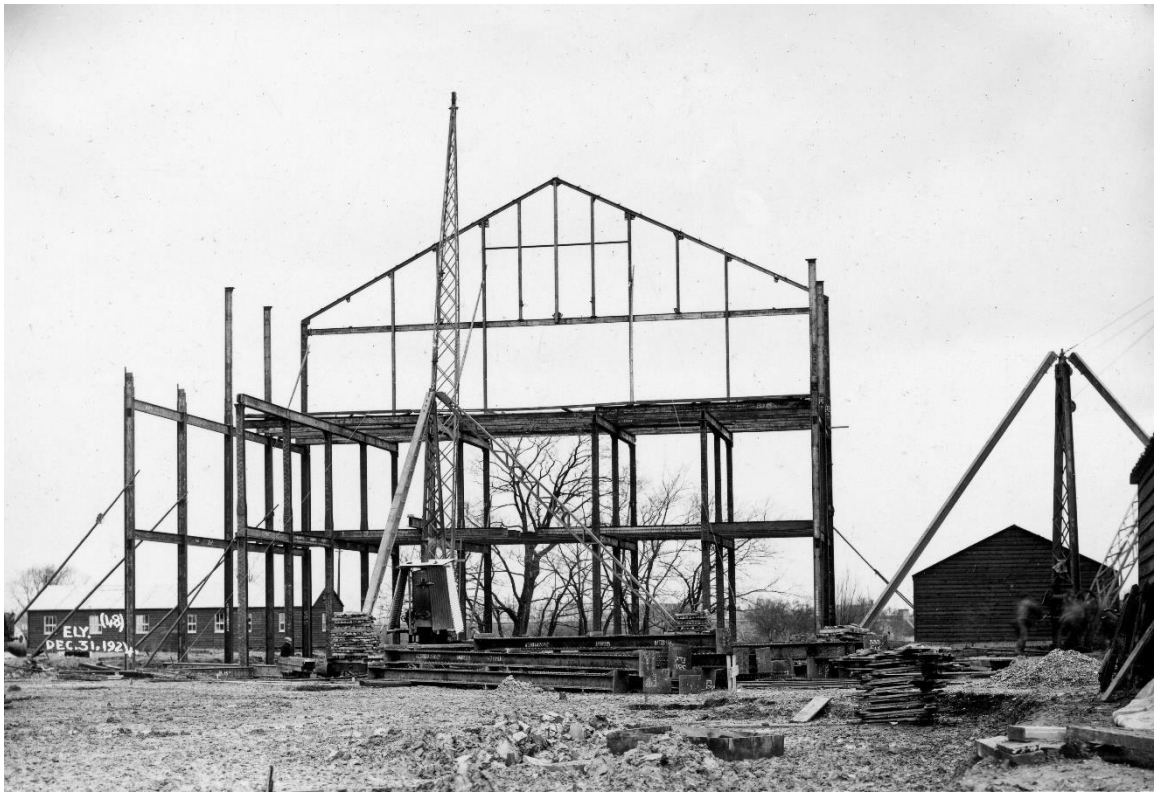
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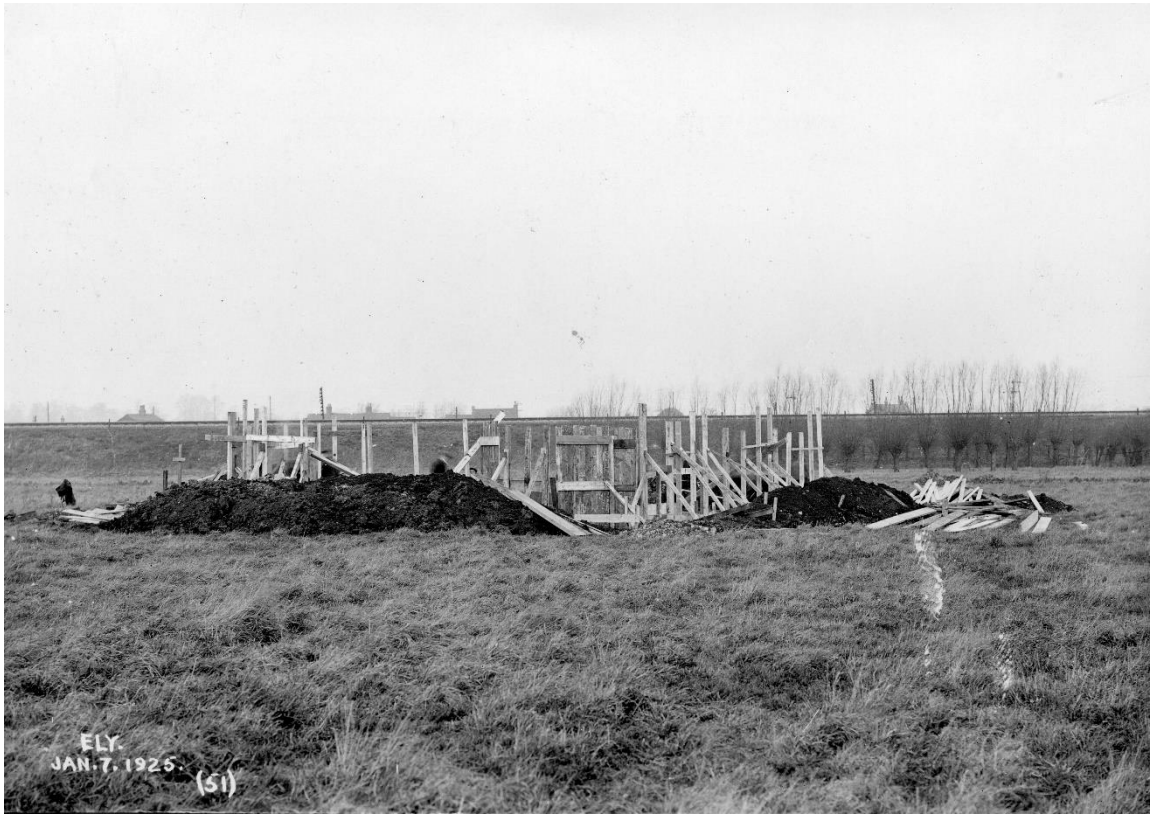
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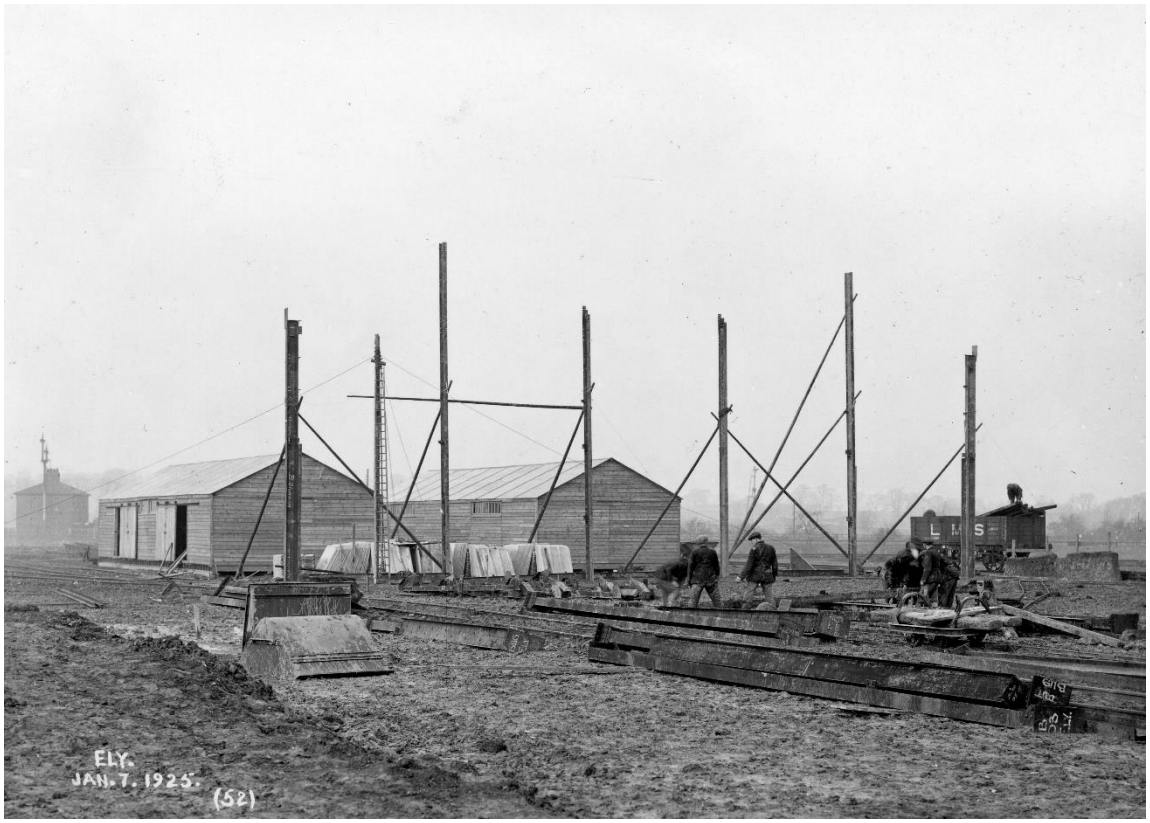
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JAN. 7. 1925.
(52)

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JAN. 7. 1925.
(53)

(54)
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JAN. 7. 1925

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JAN. 7. 1925. (55)

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JAN. 14. 1925.
(56)

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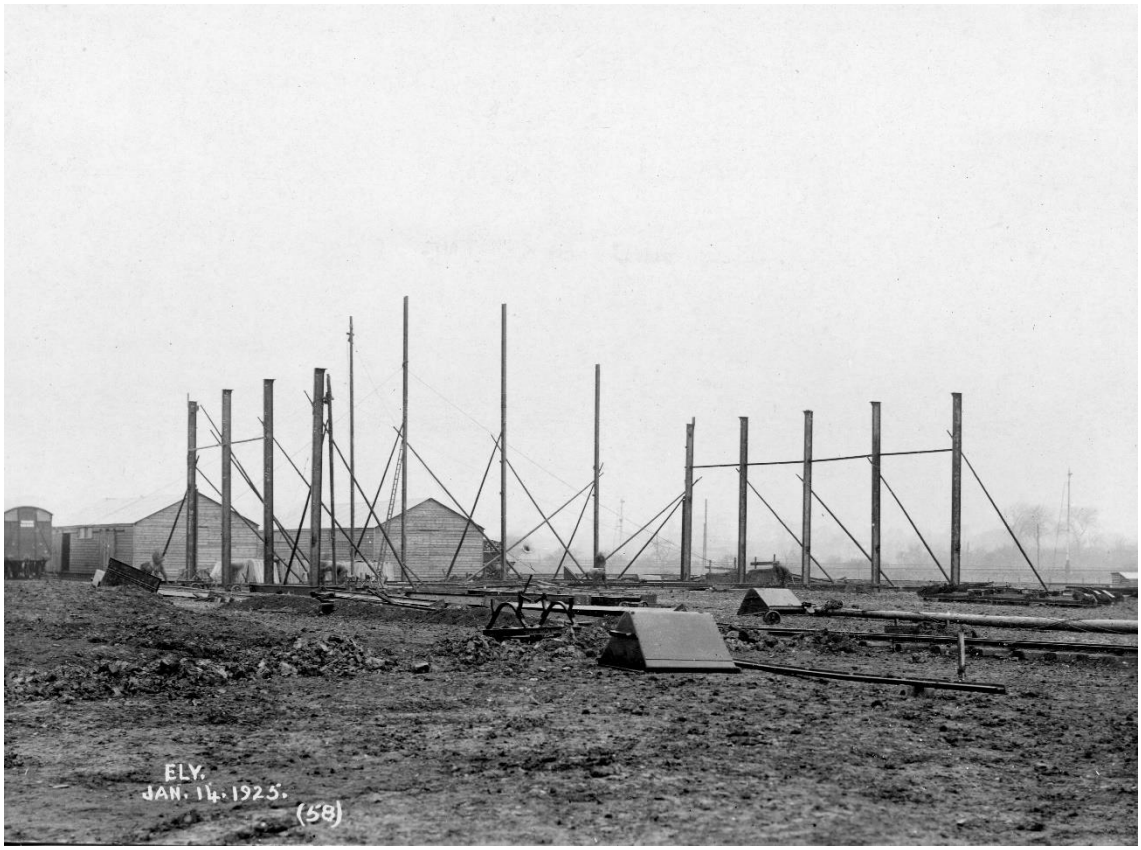
(57)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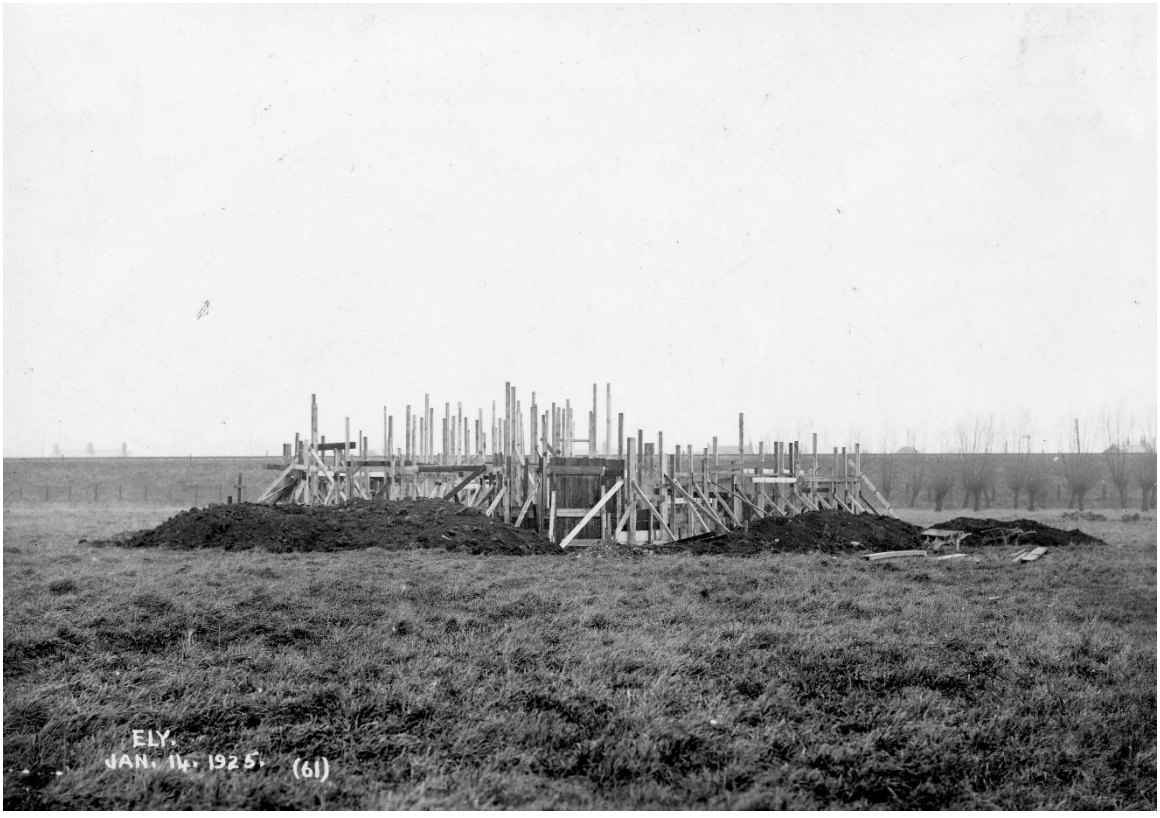
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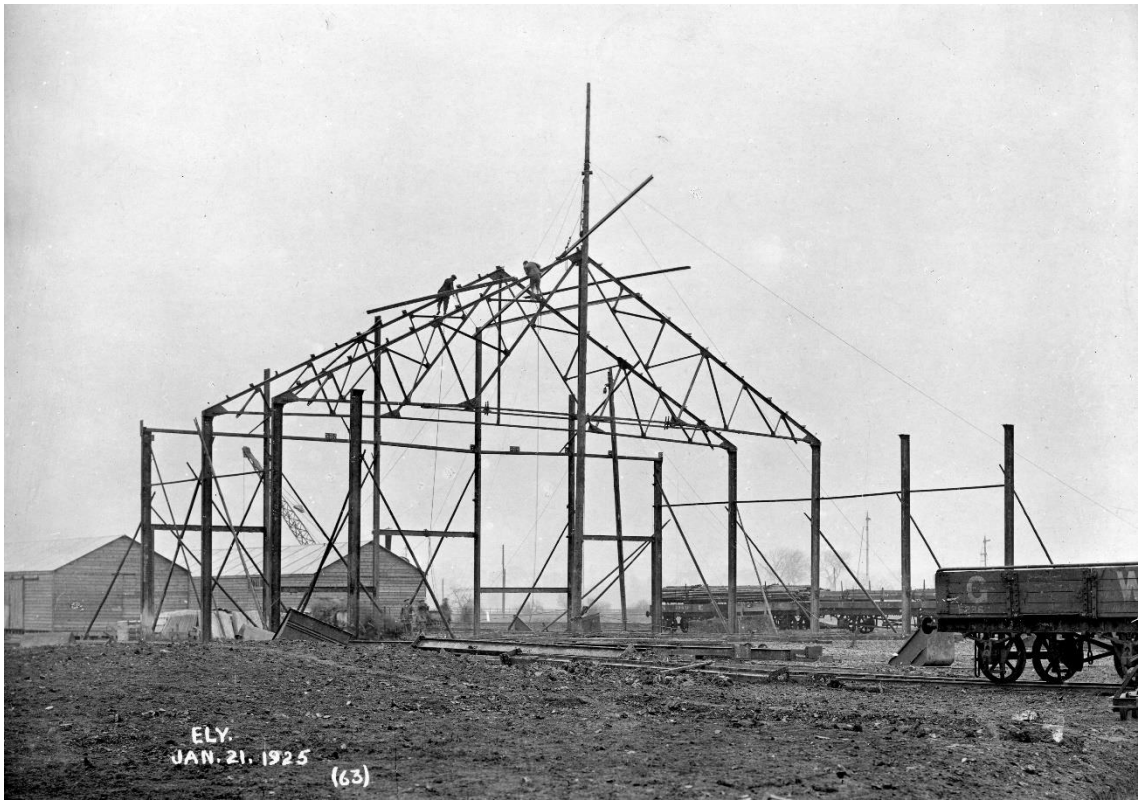
(62)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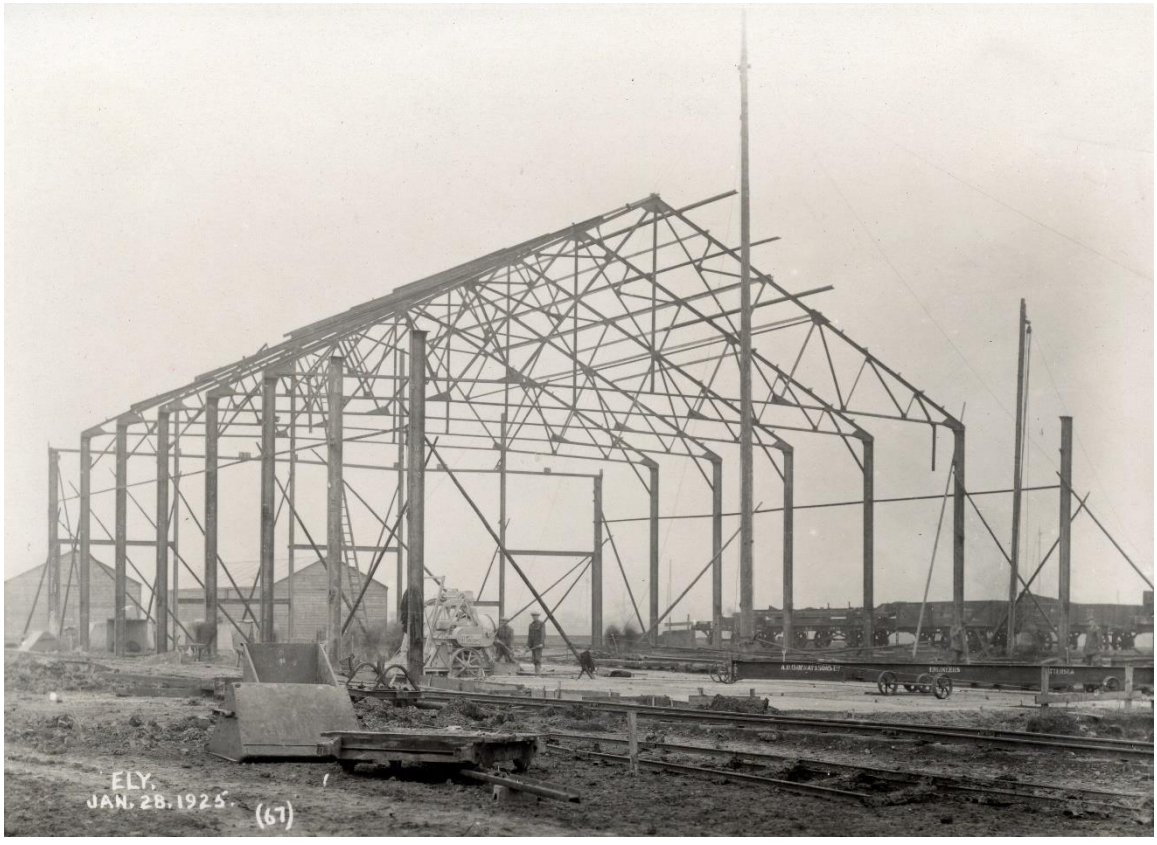
(66)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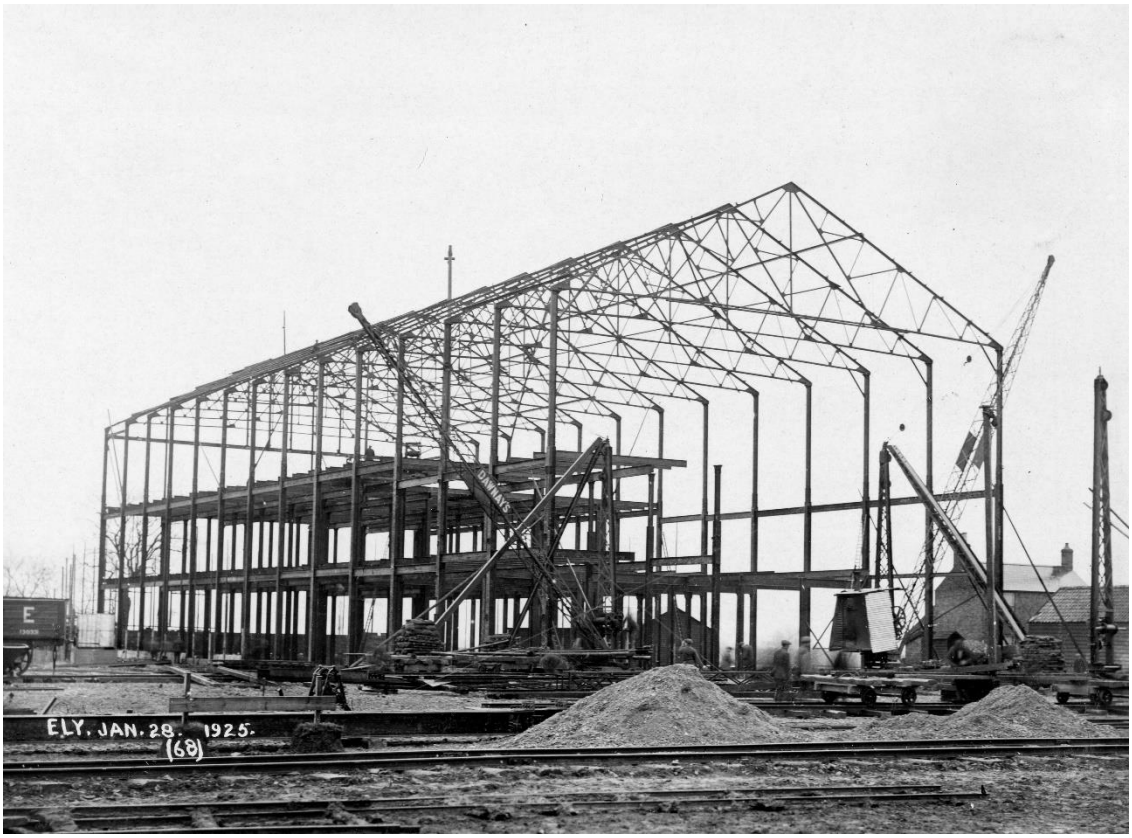
(67)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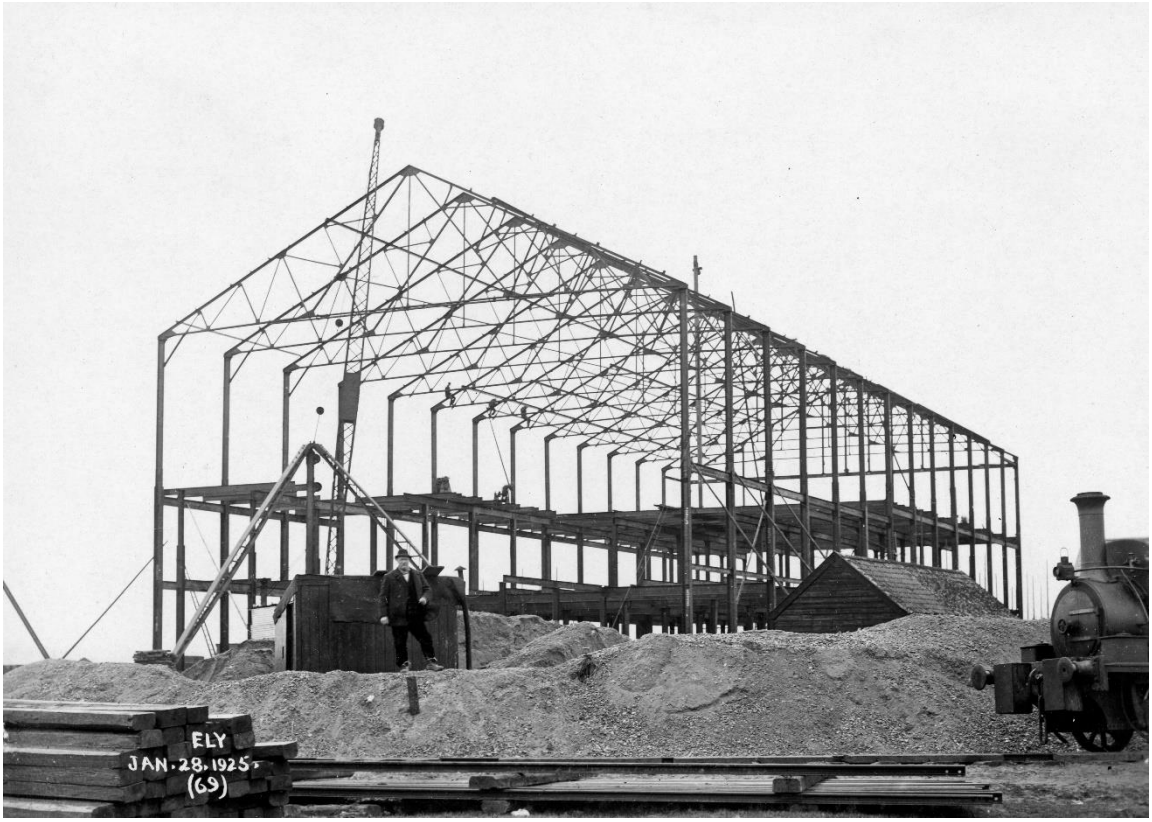
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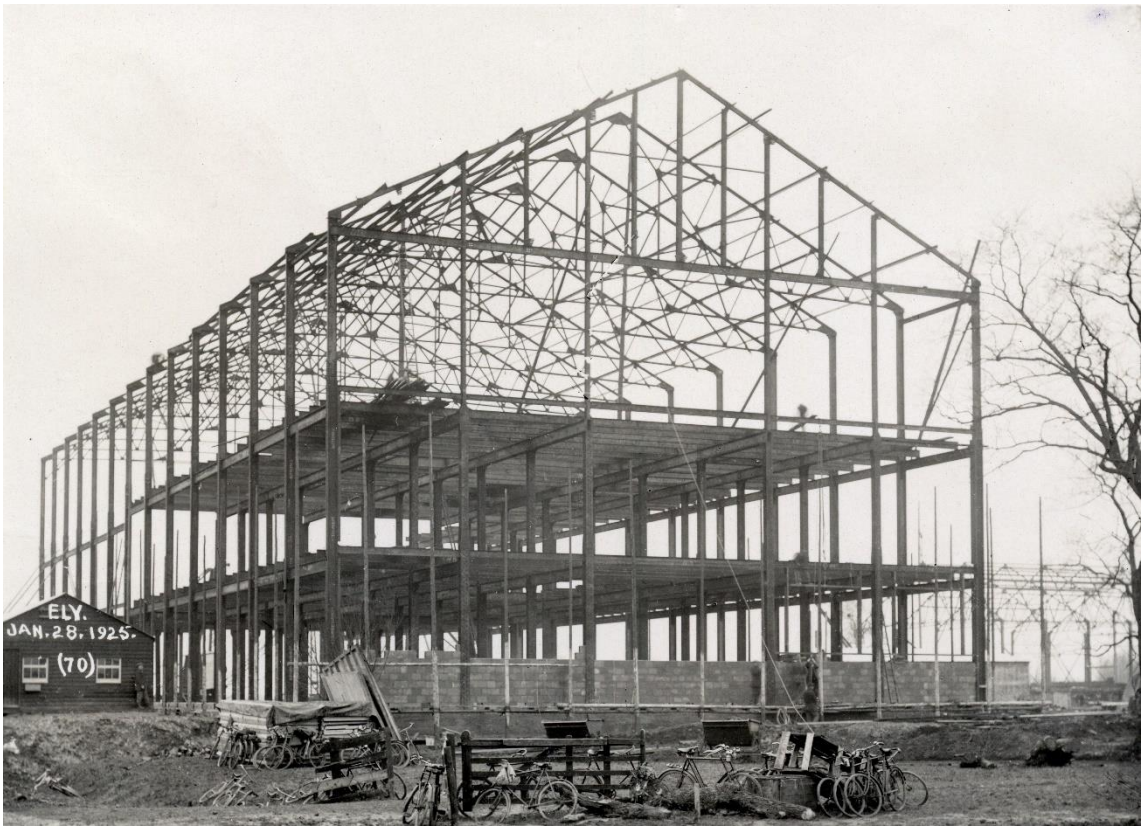
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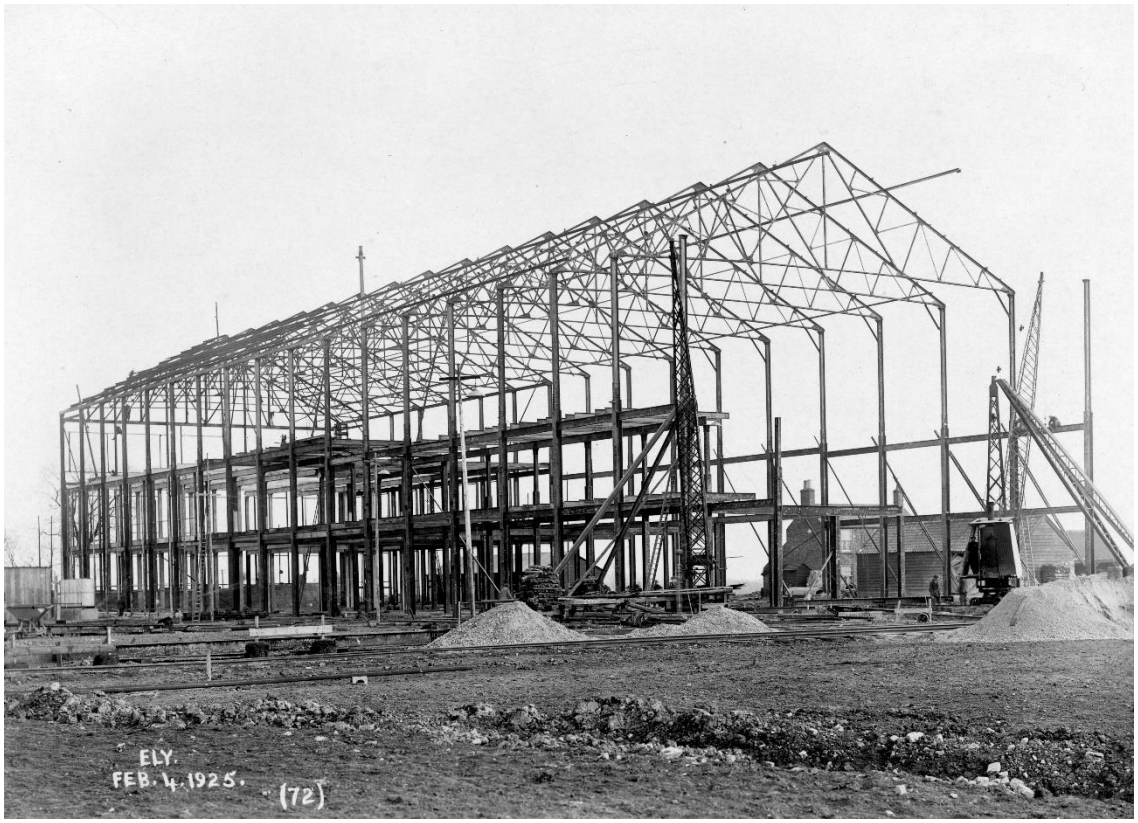
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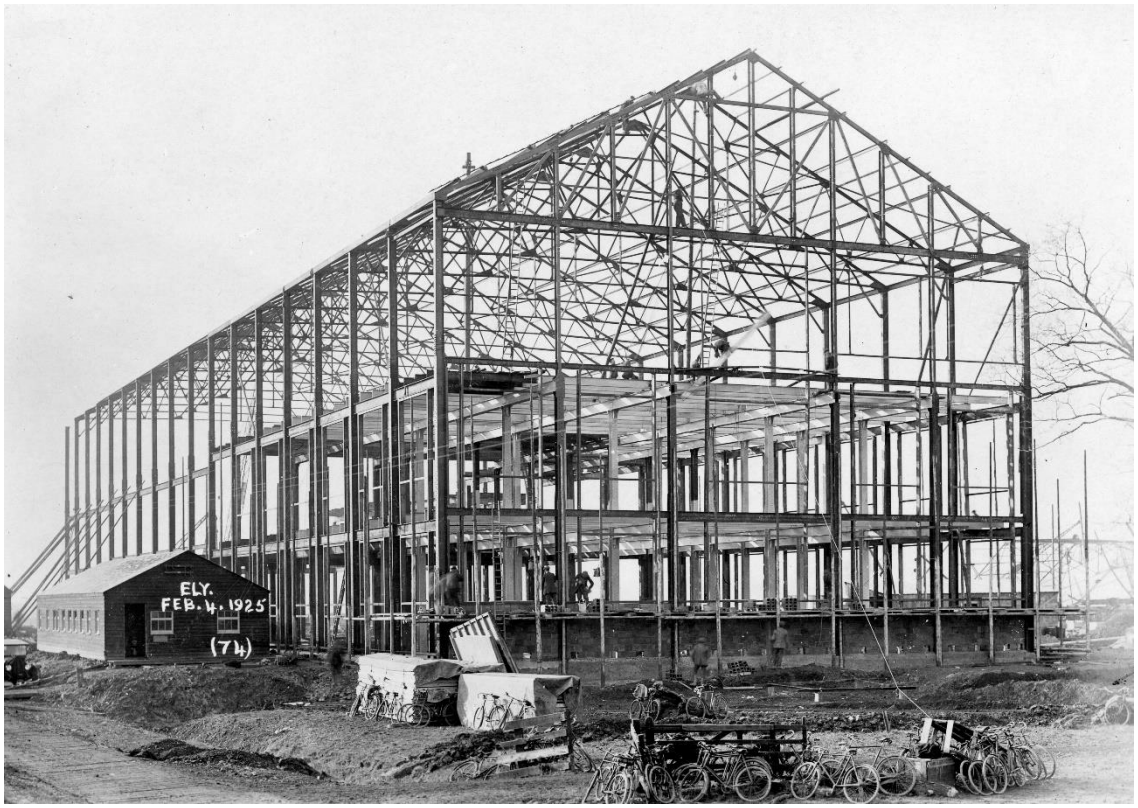
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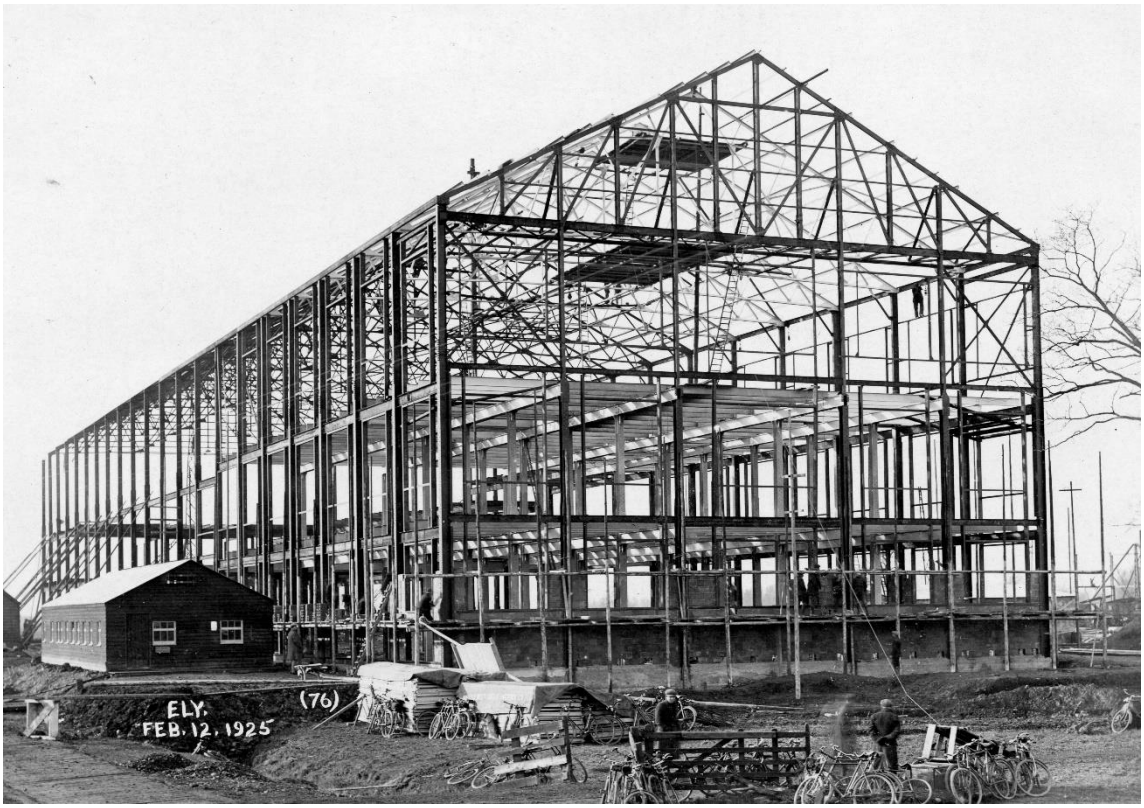
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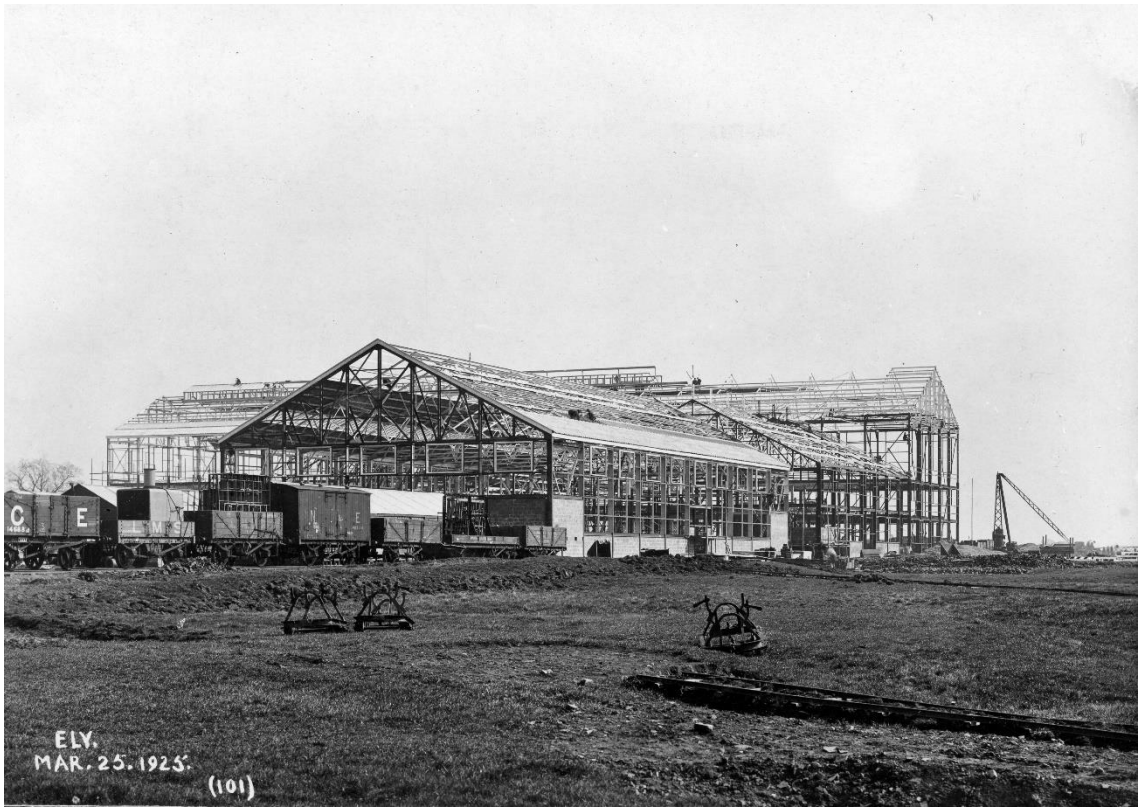
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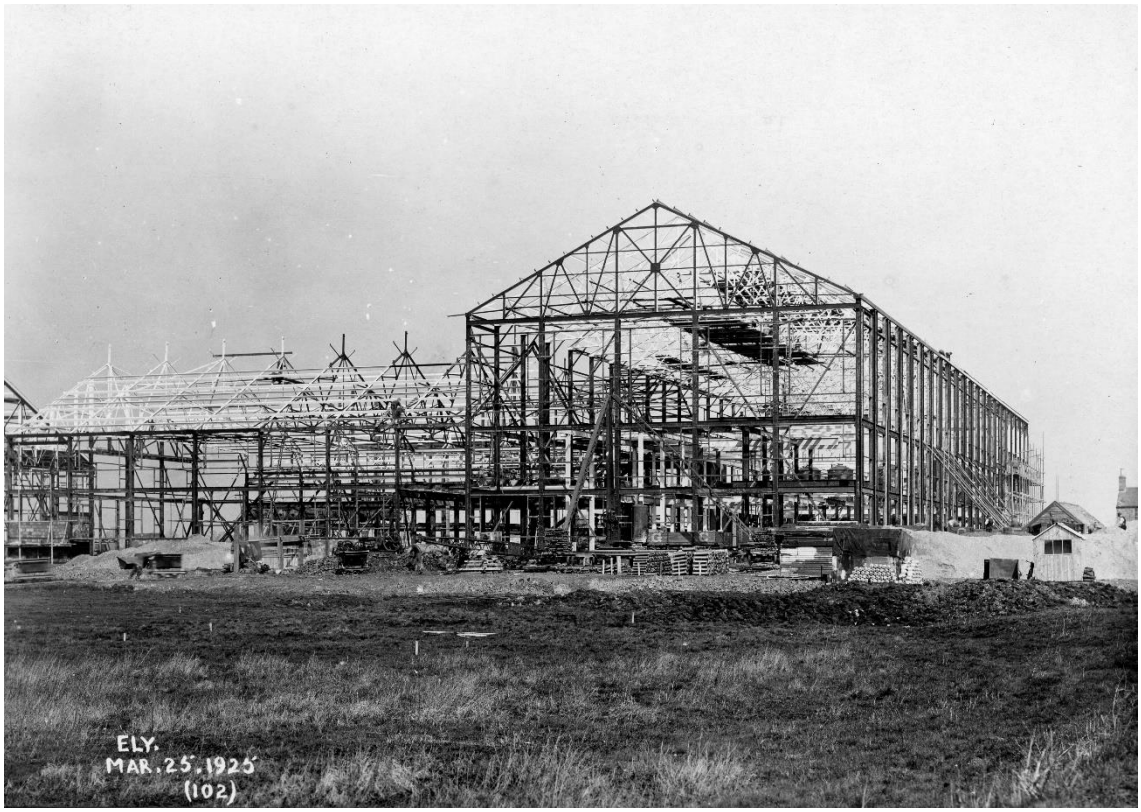
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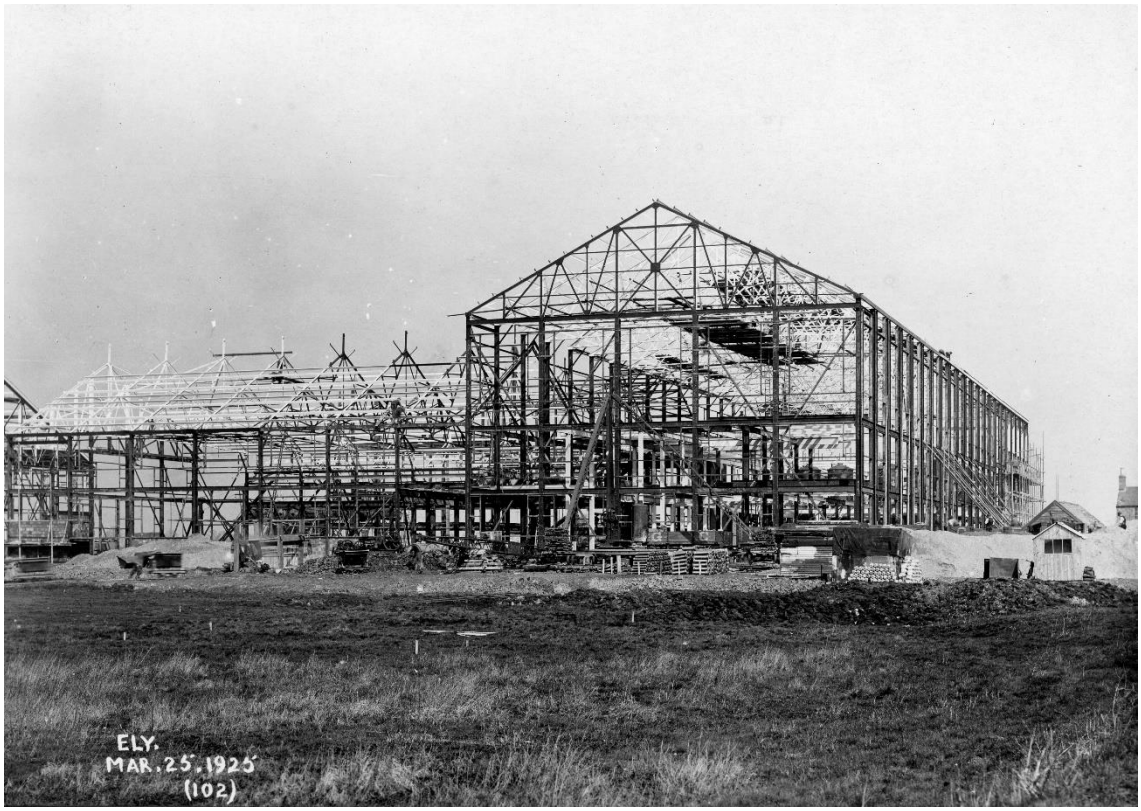
(102)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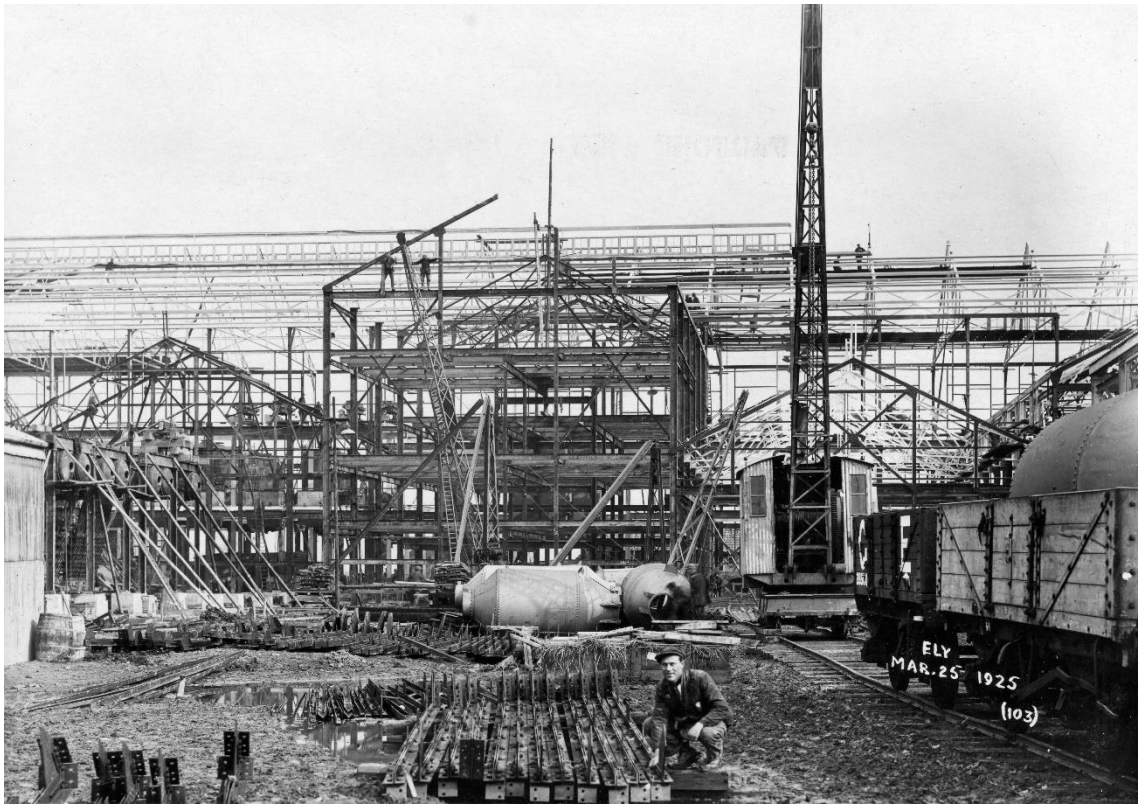
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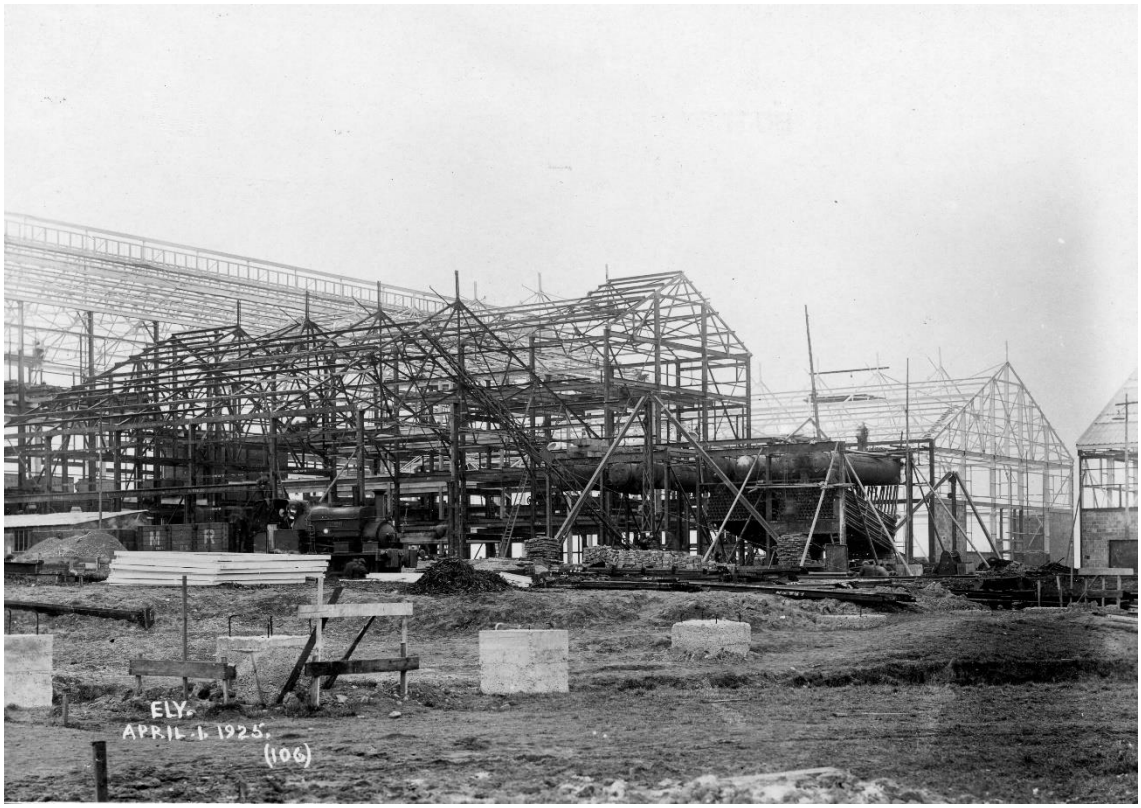
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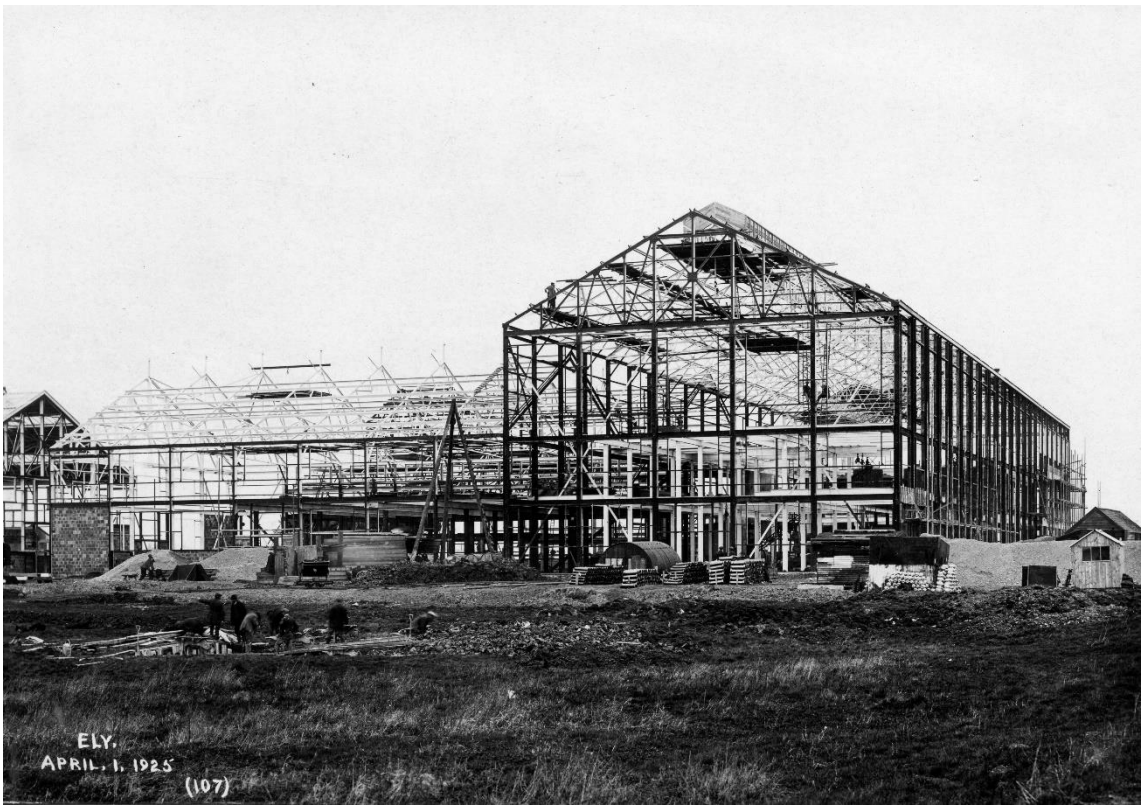
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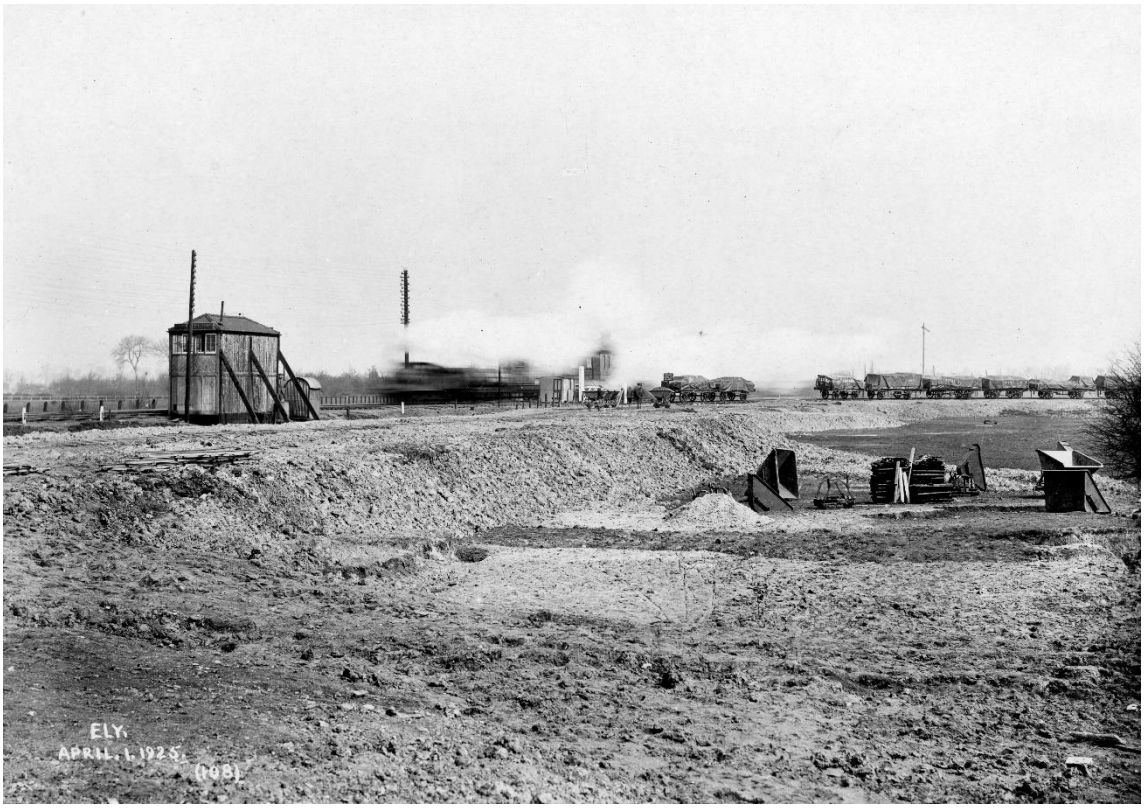
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(109)

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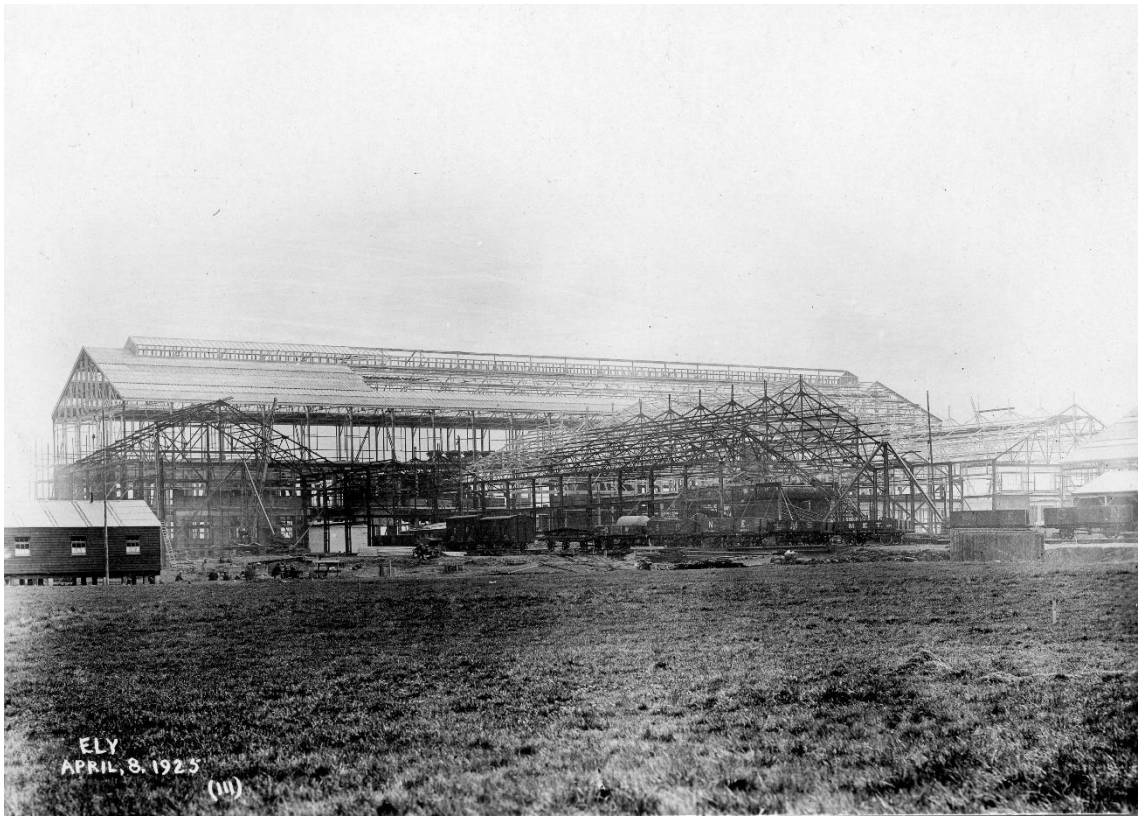
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(112)
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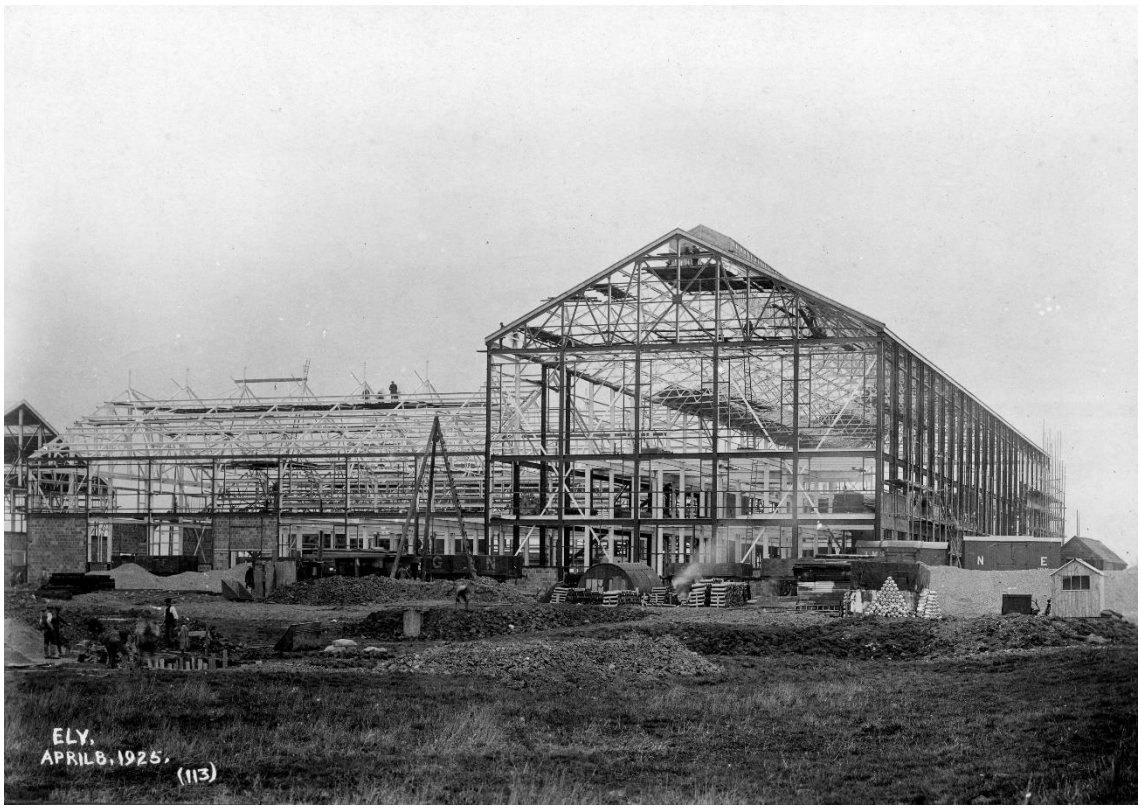
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(113)
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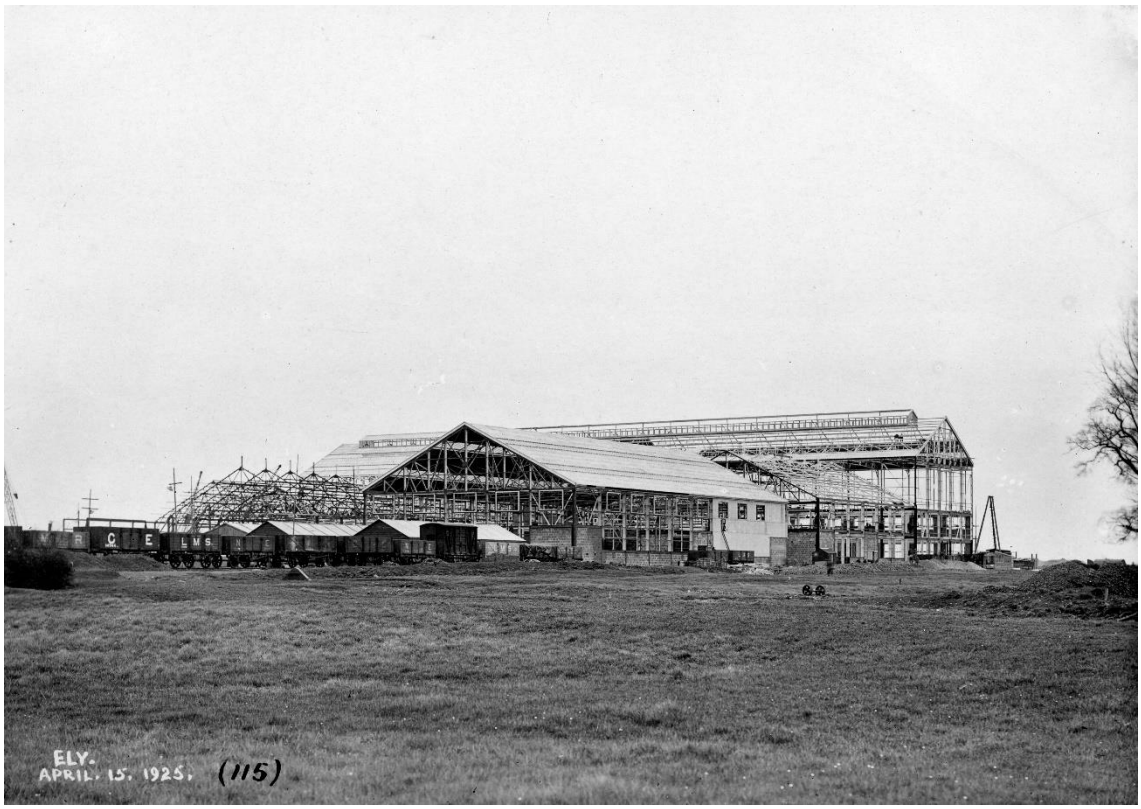
(114)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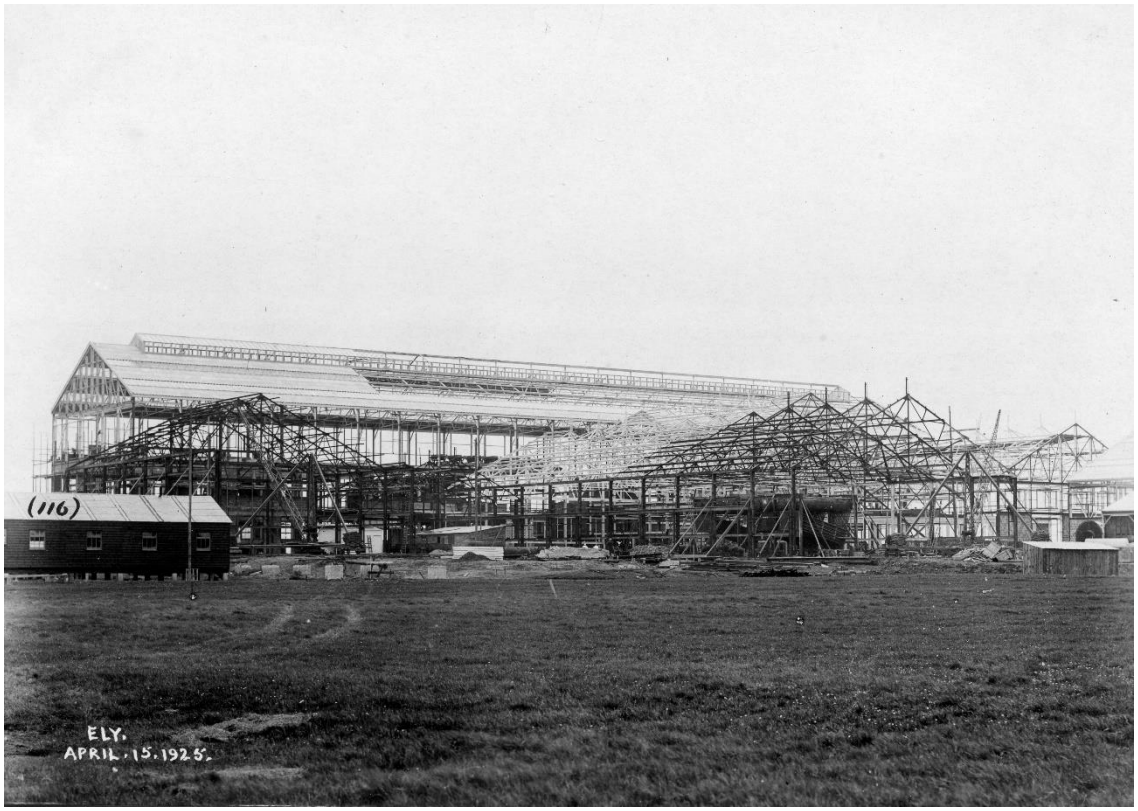
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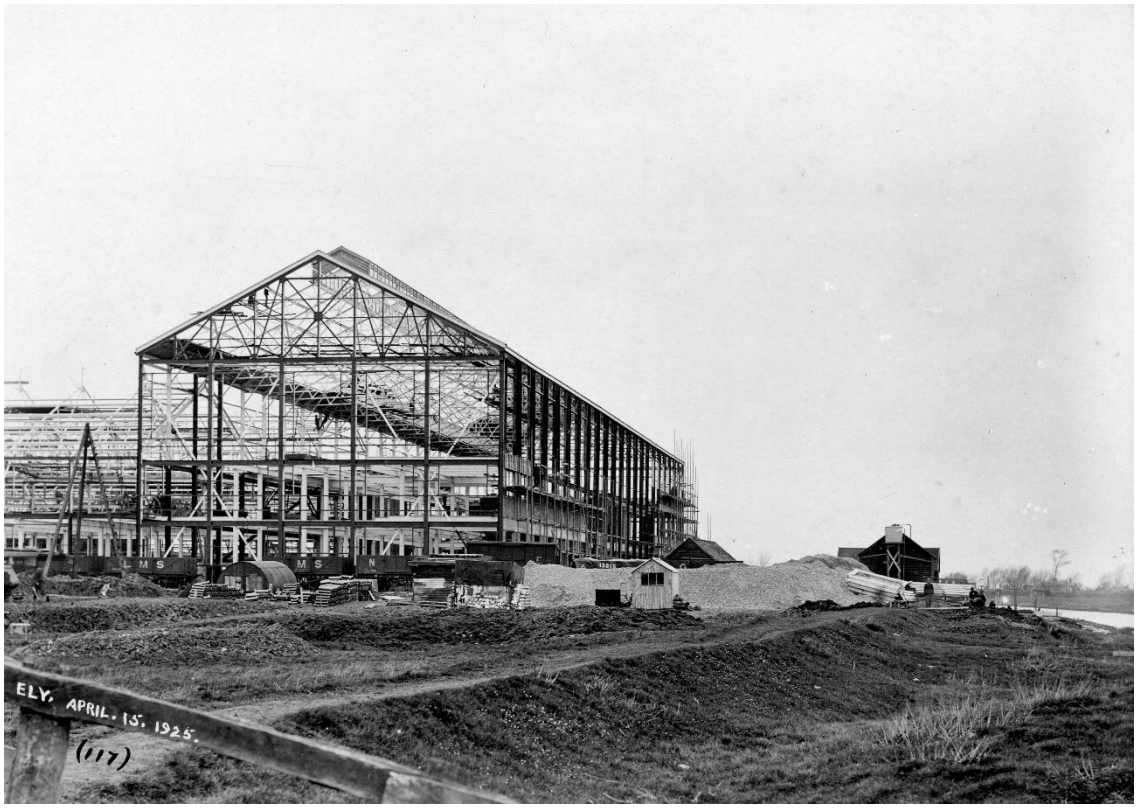
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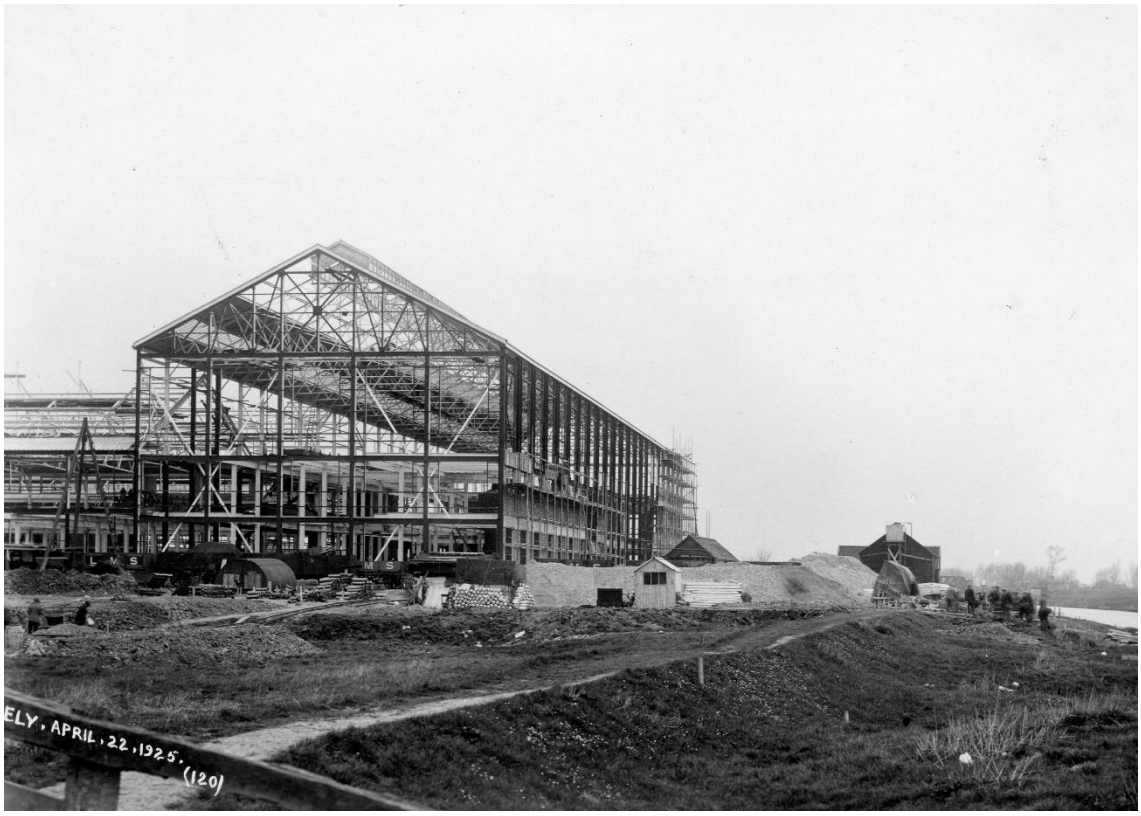
APRIL. 22. 1925
(119)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APRIL. 22. 1925
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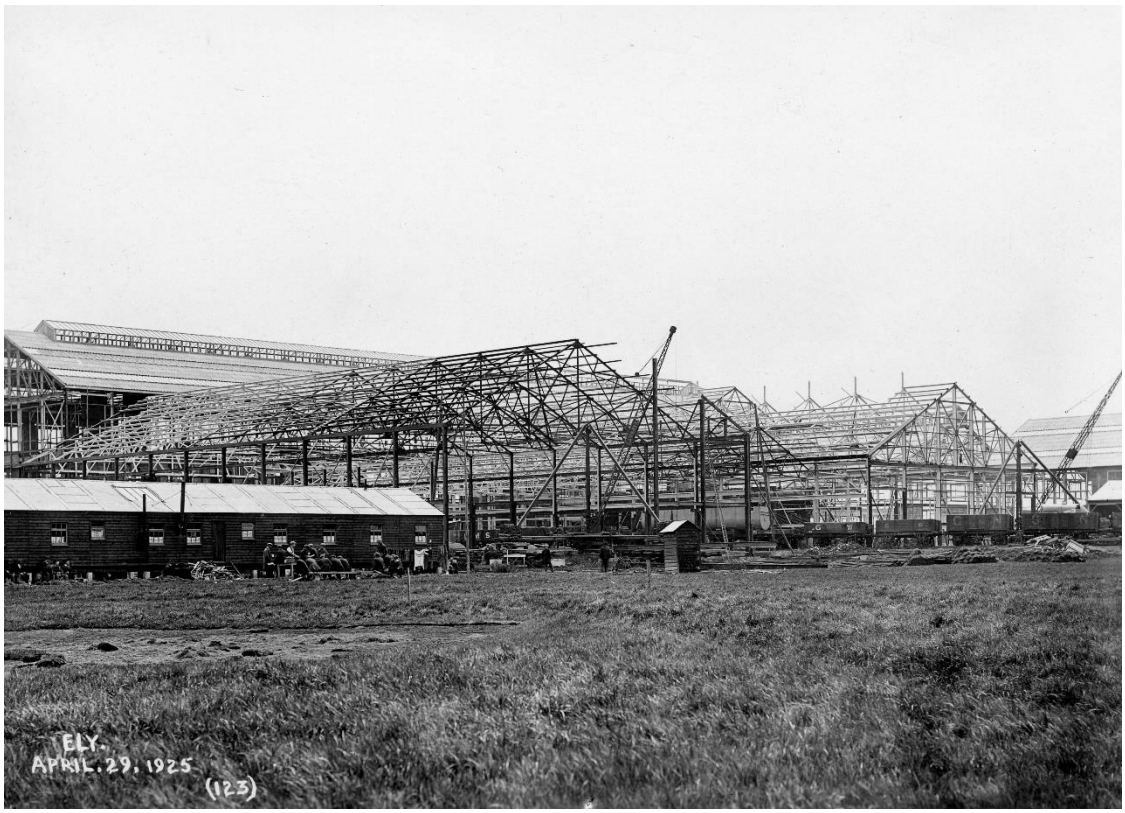
(122)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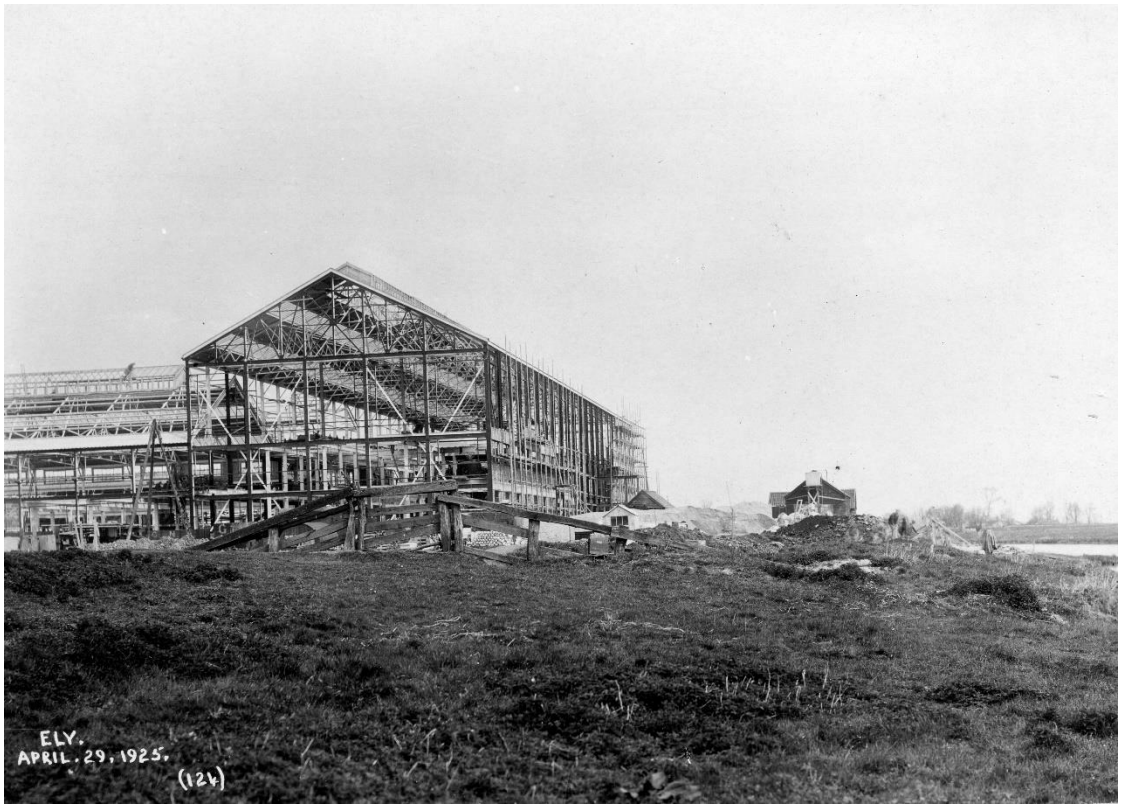
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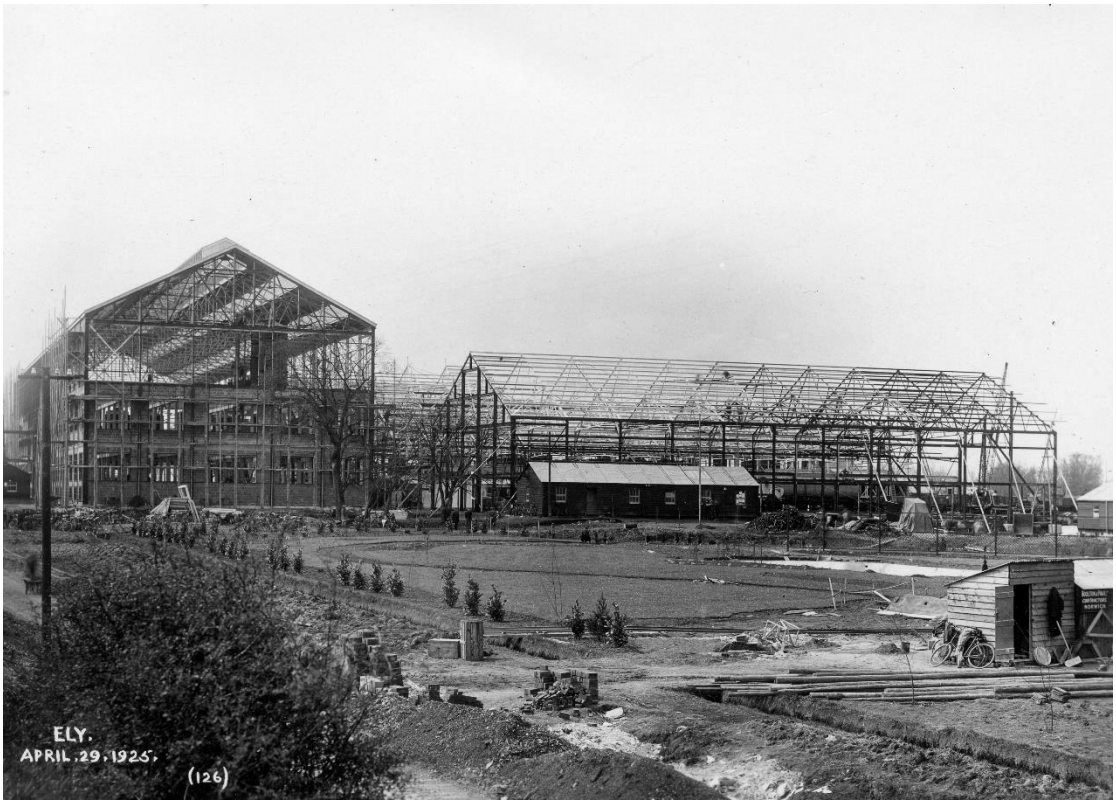
(125)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(126)

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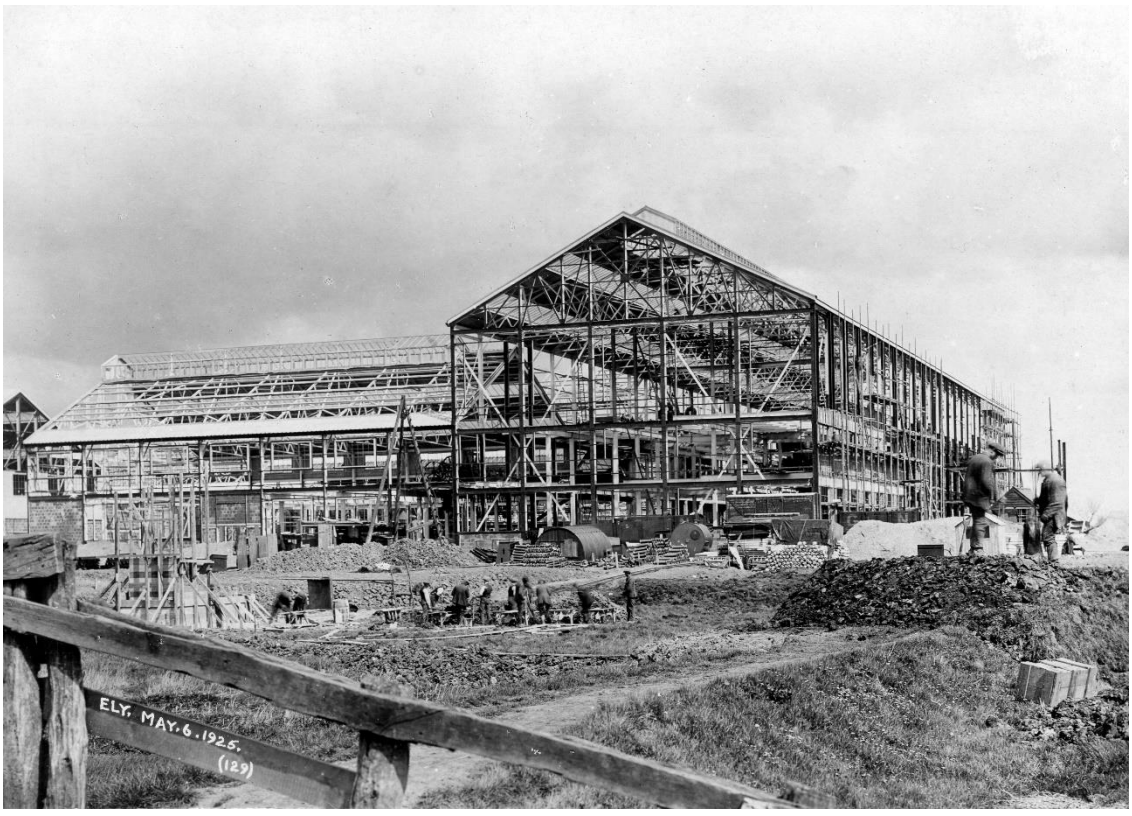
(128)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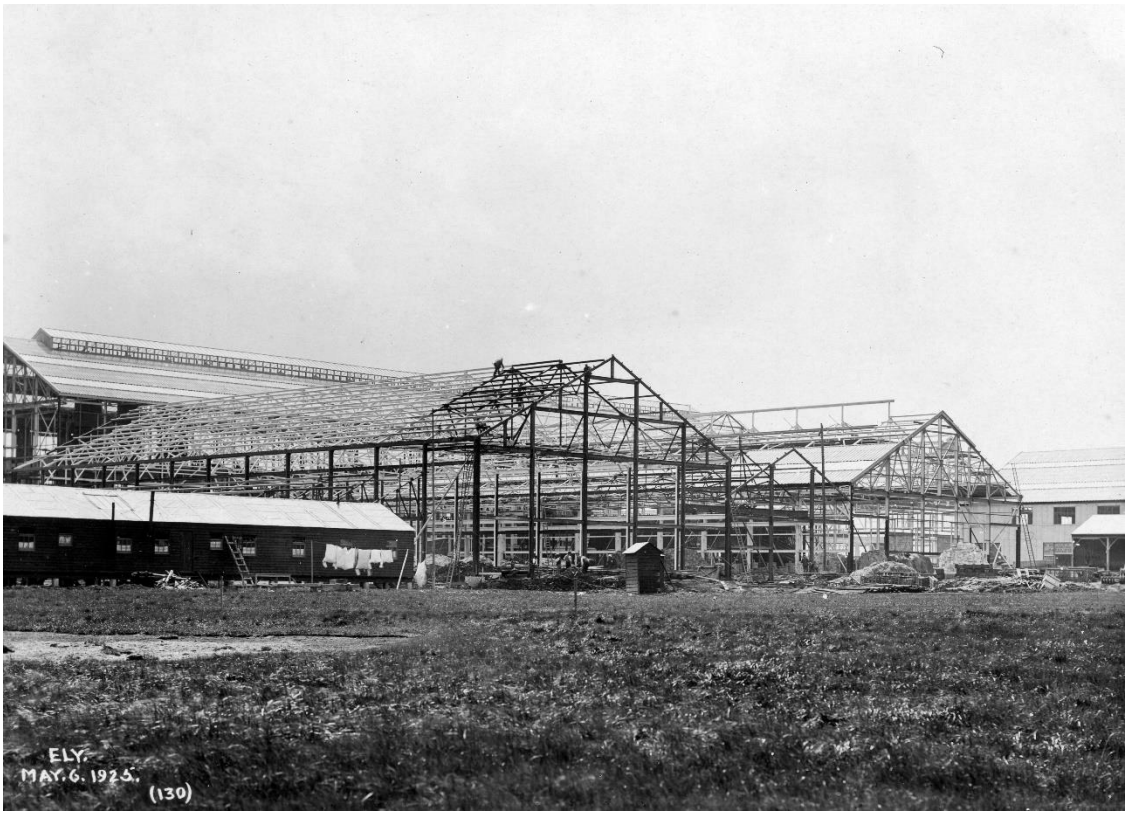
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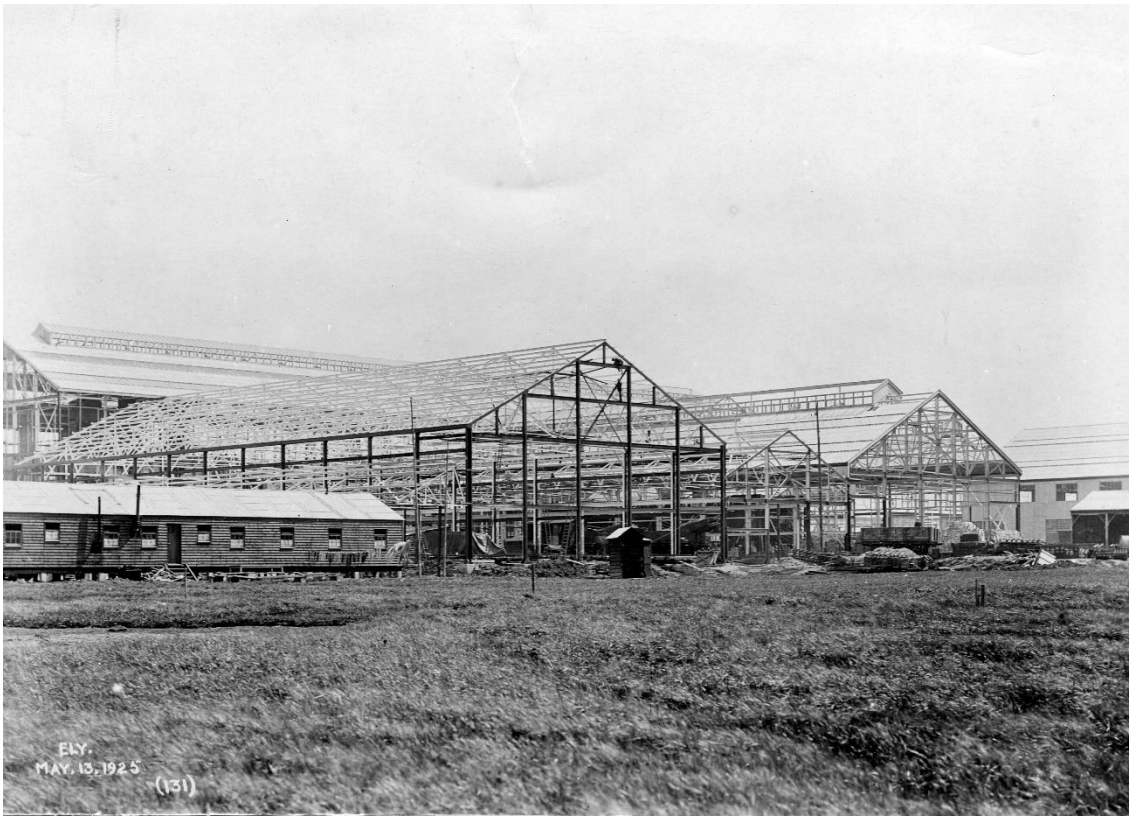
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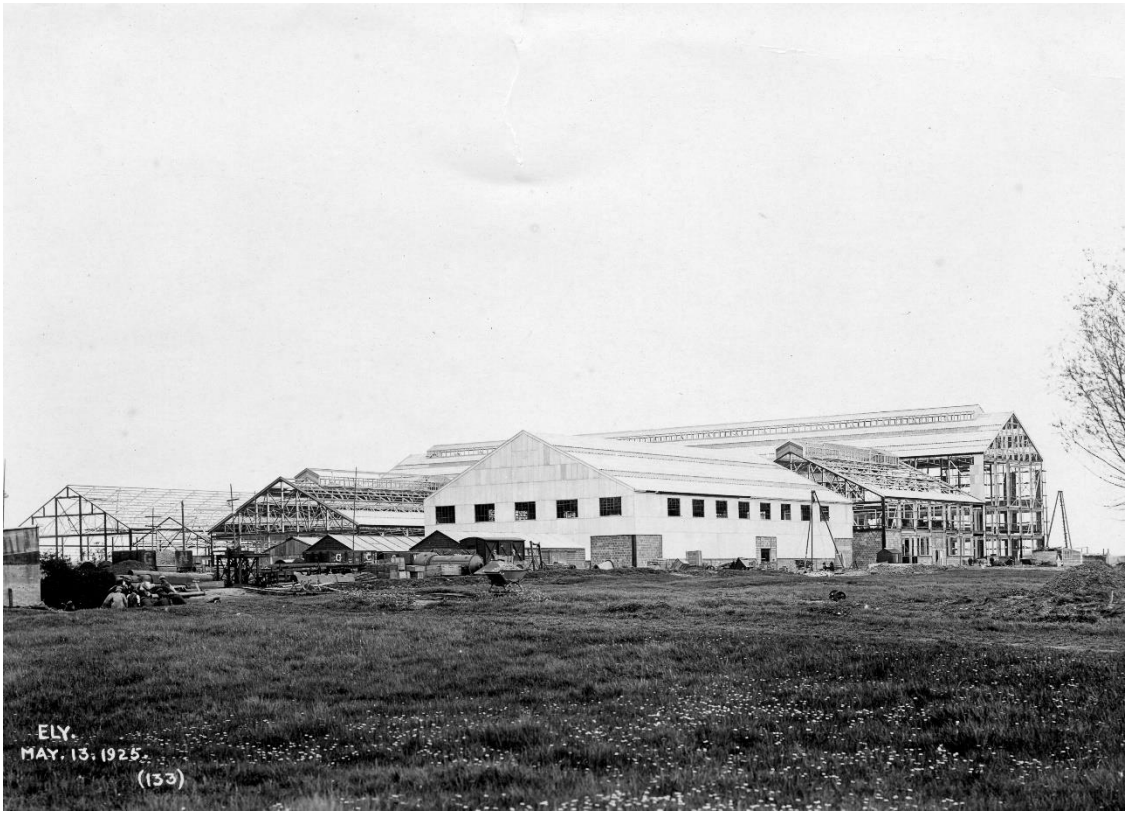
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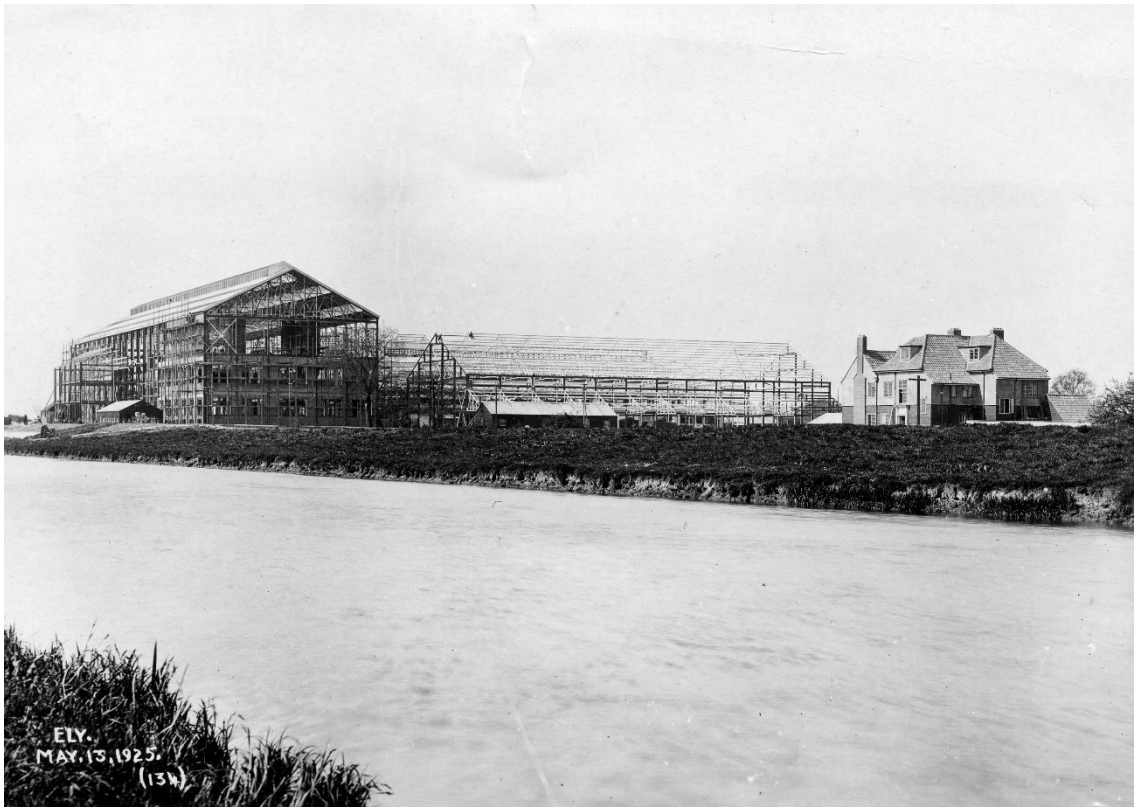
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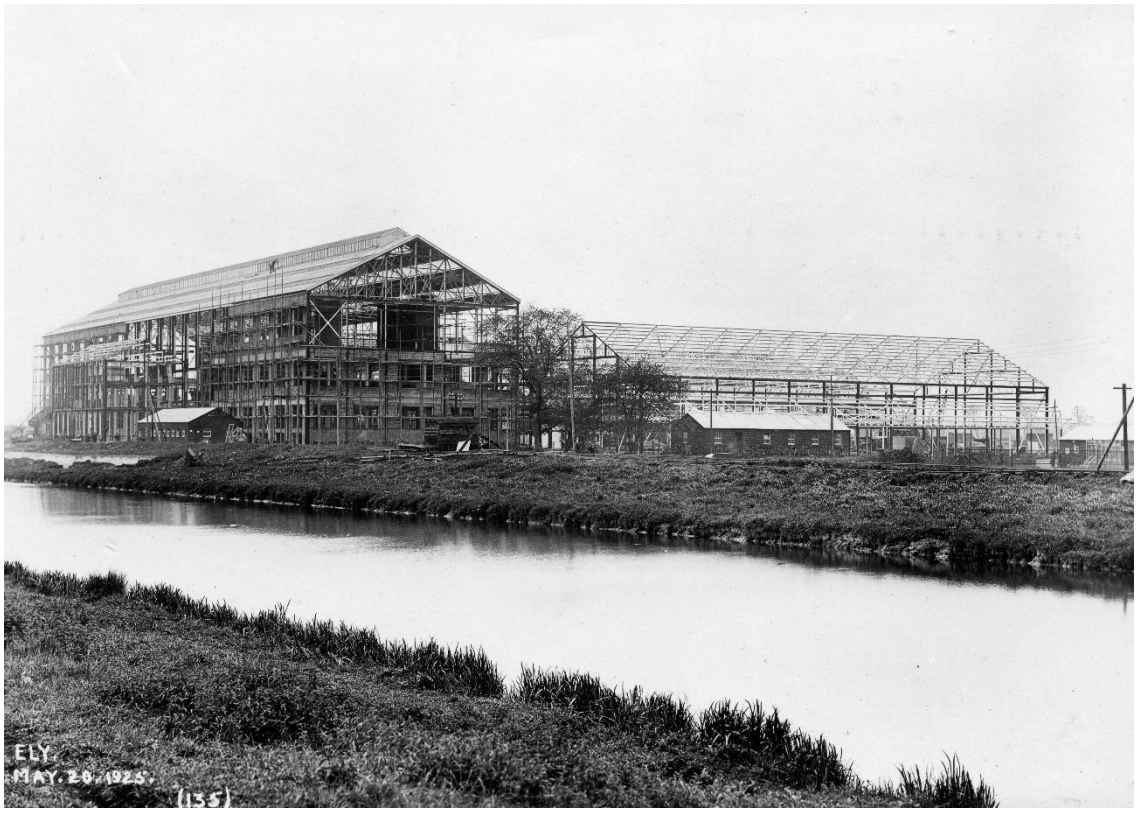
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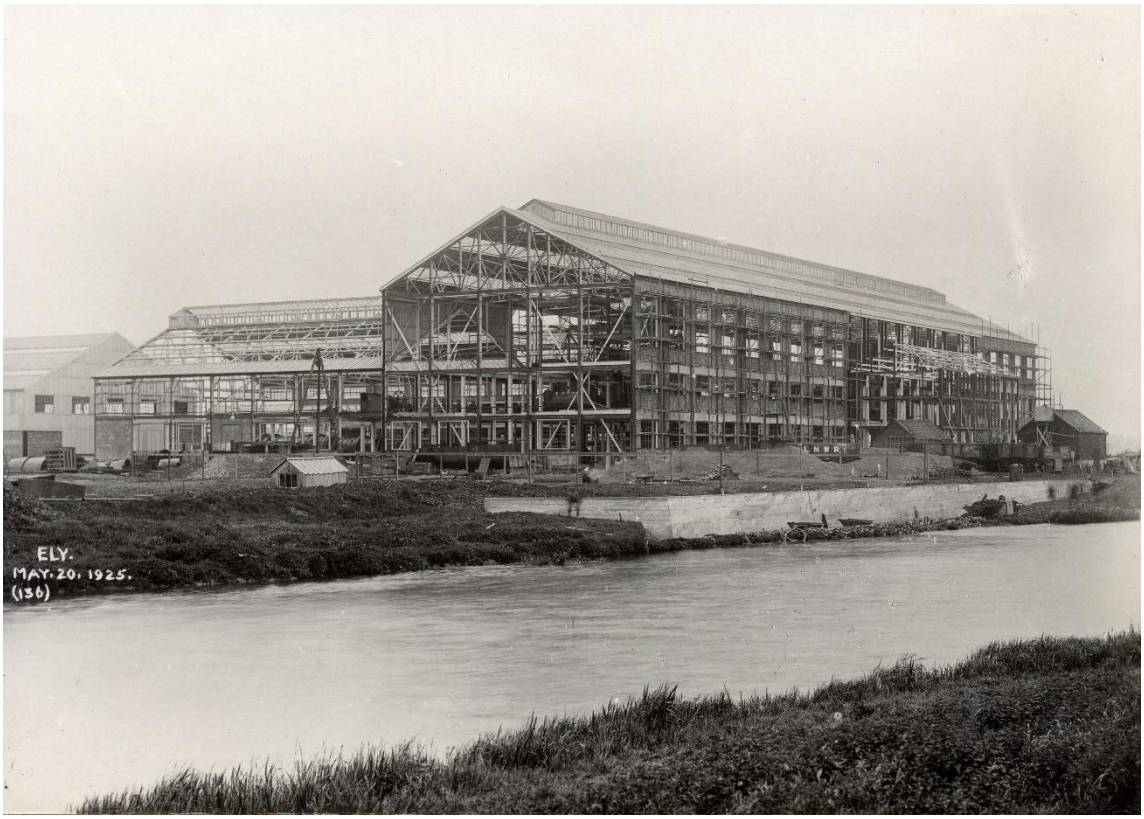
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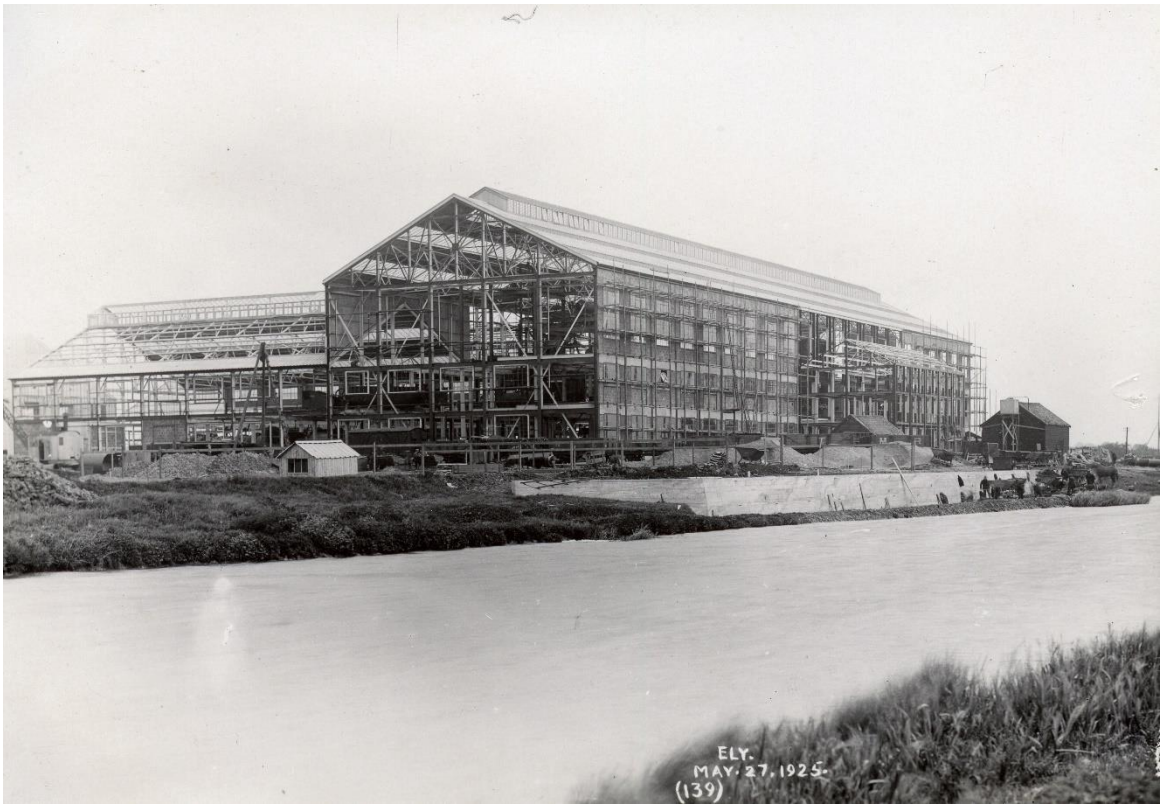
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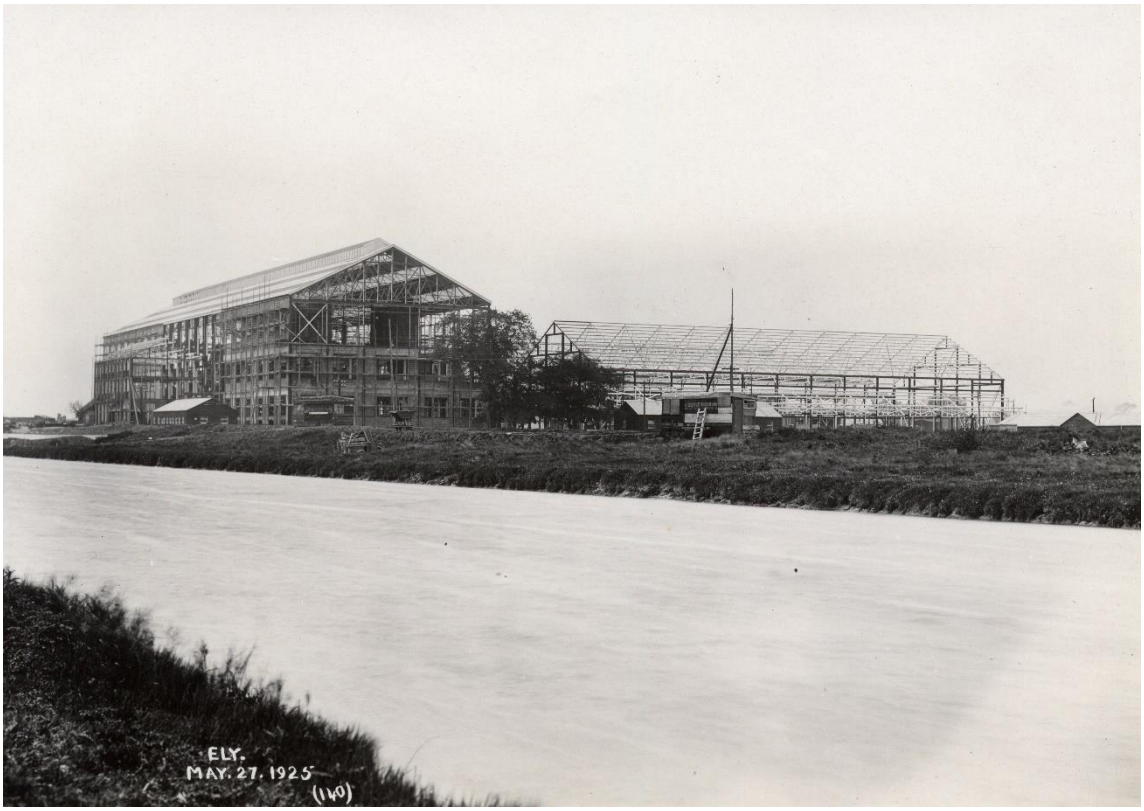
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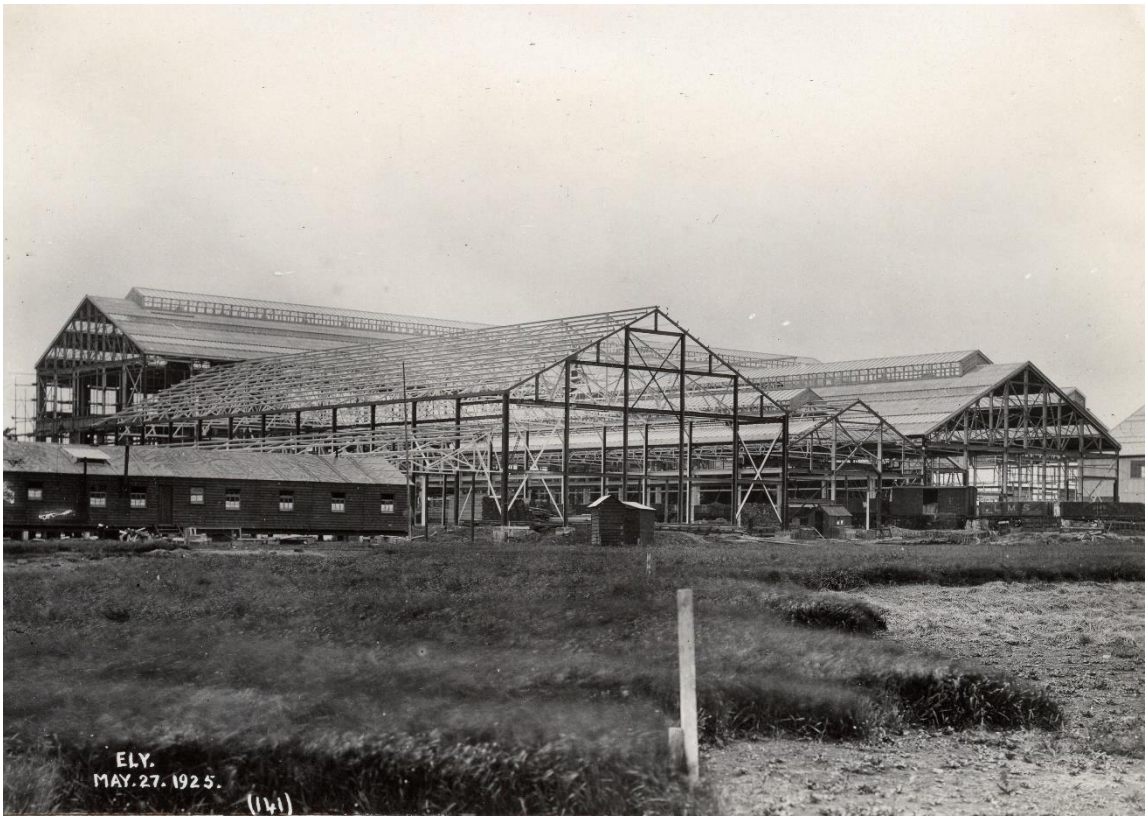
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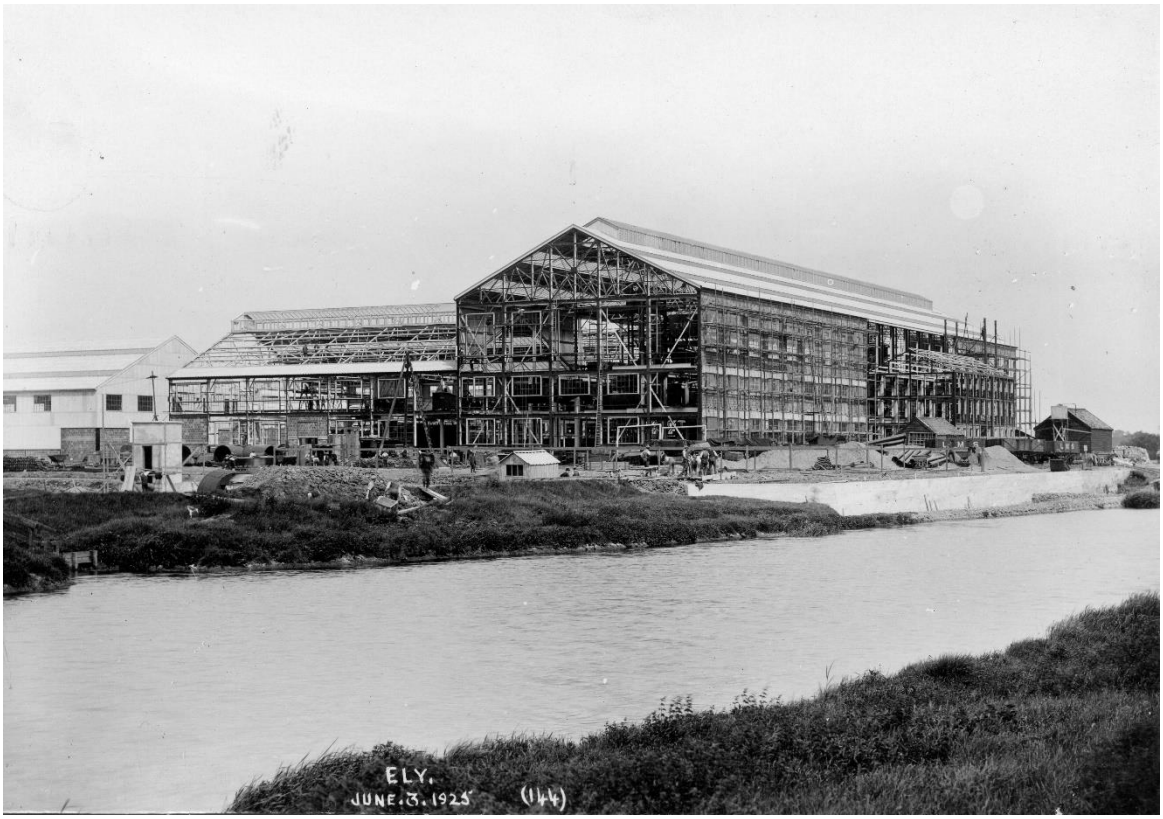
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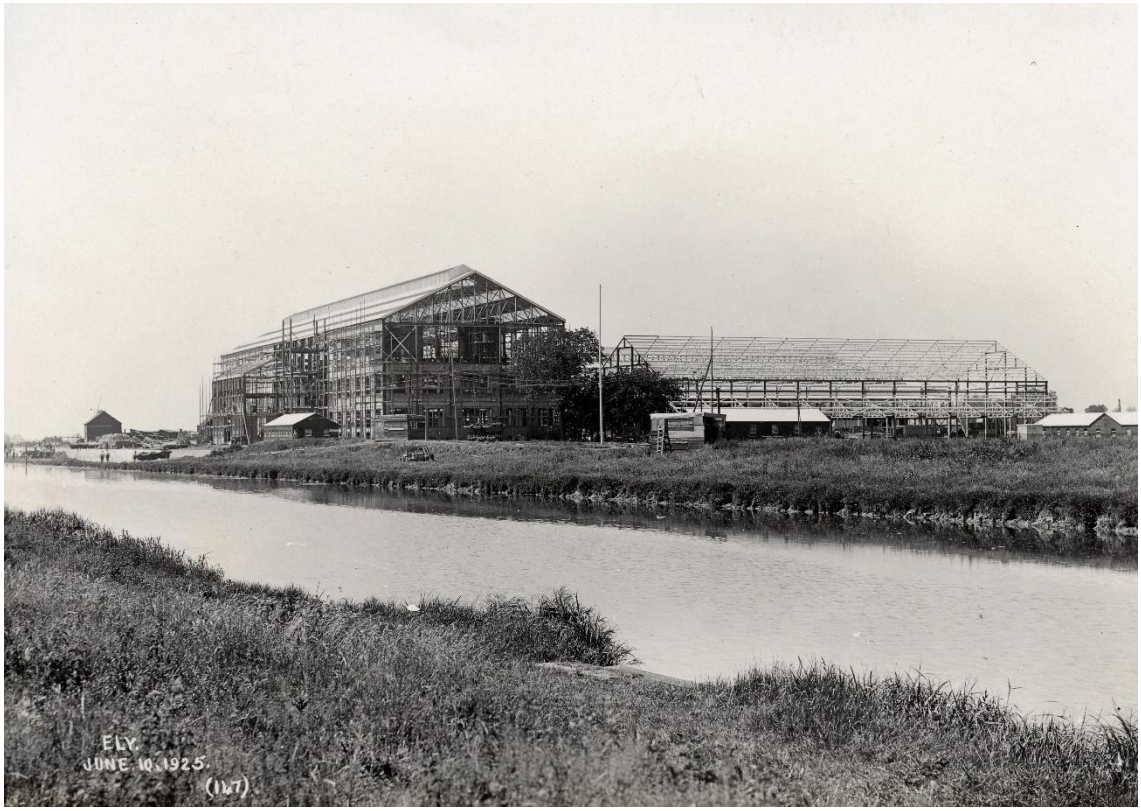
(146)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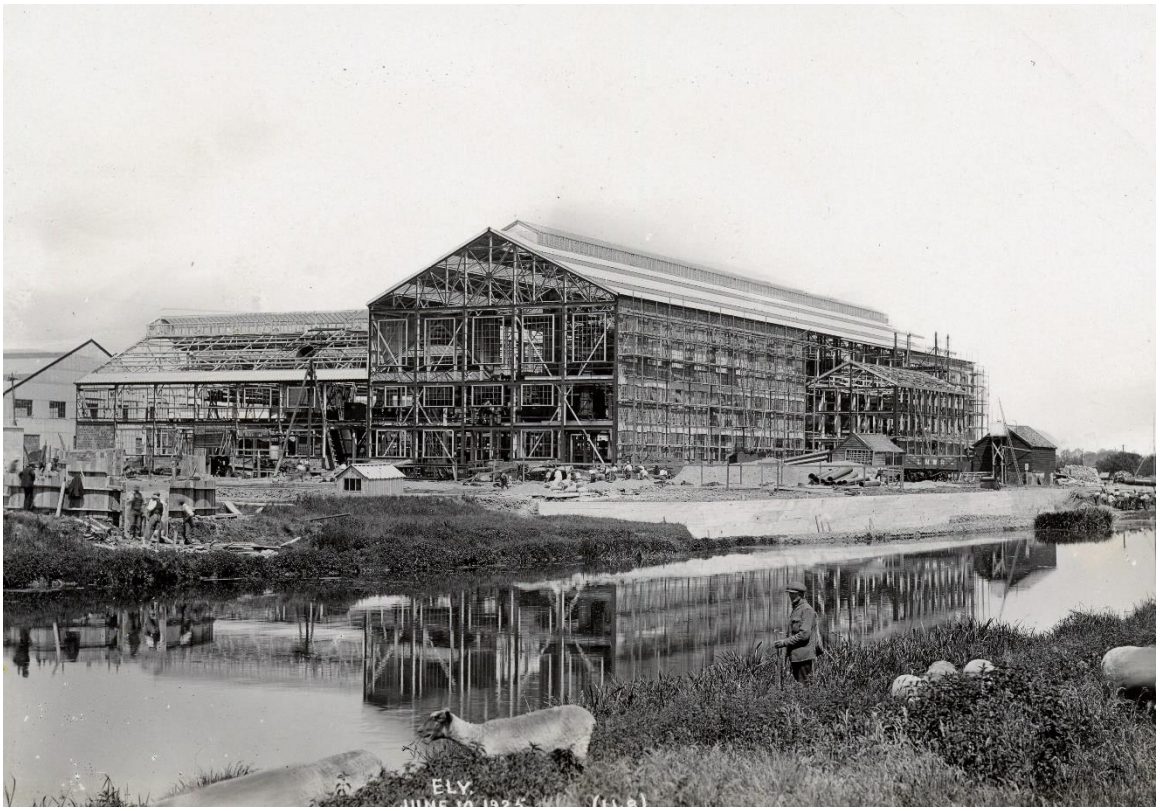
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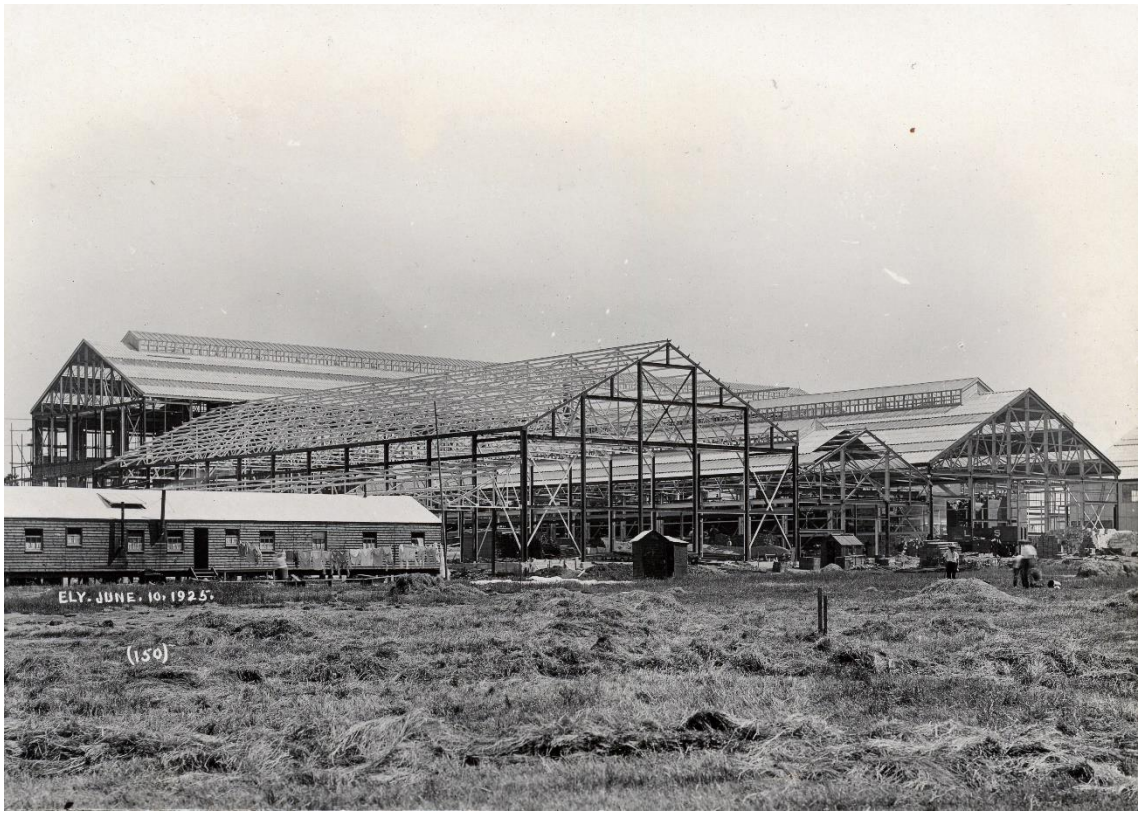
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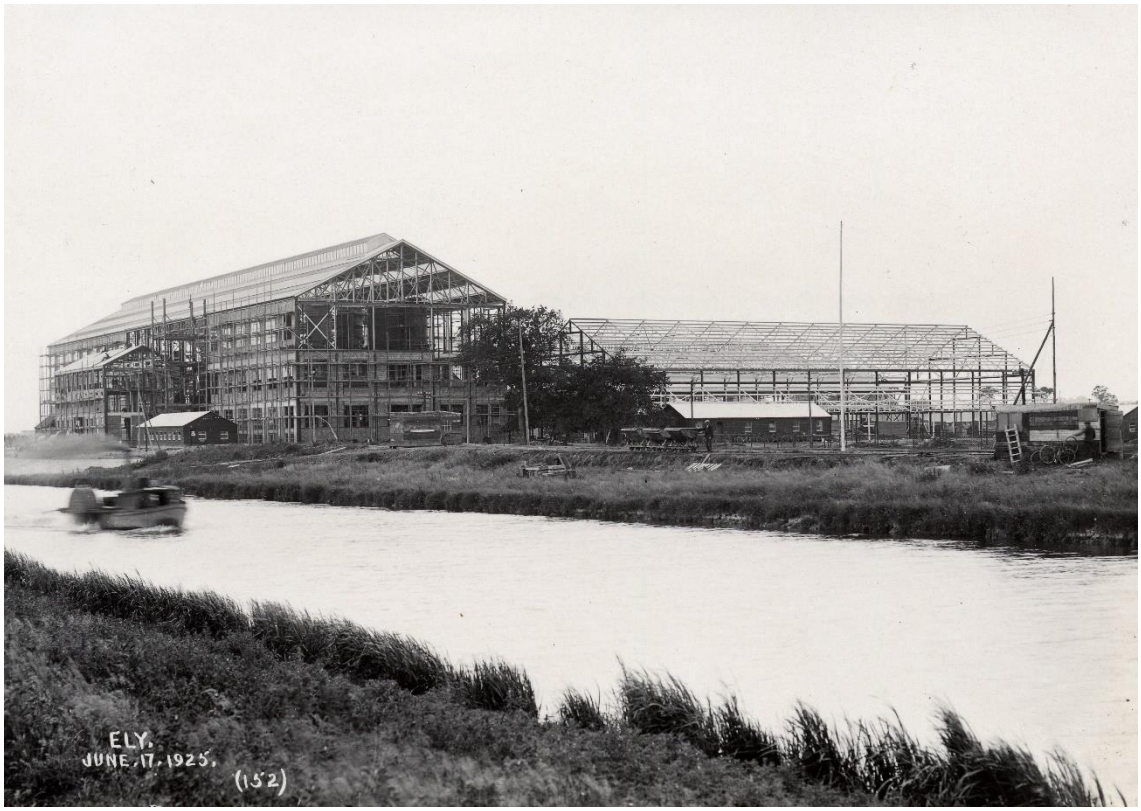
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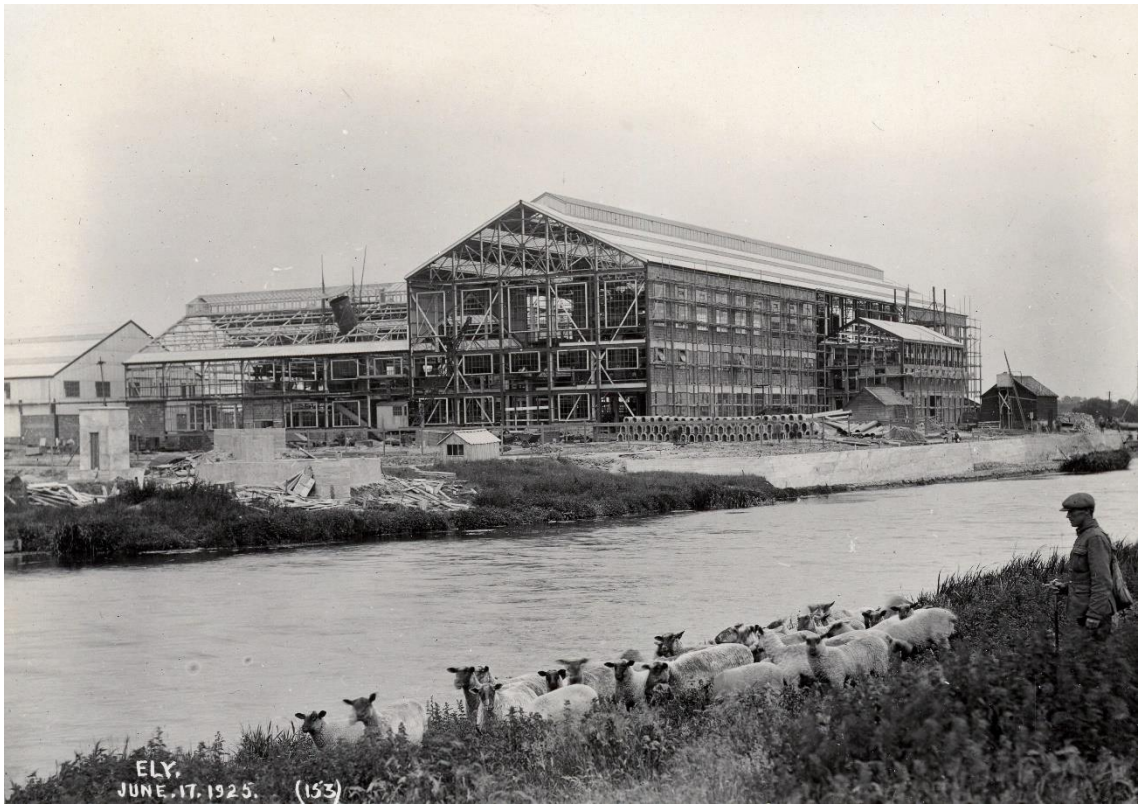
(152)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(154)

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(155)

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(156)

ELY.
JUNE. 25. 1925.
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JUNE 25. 1925. (159)

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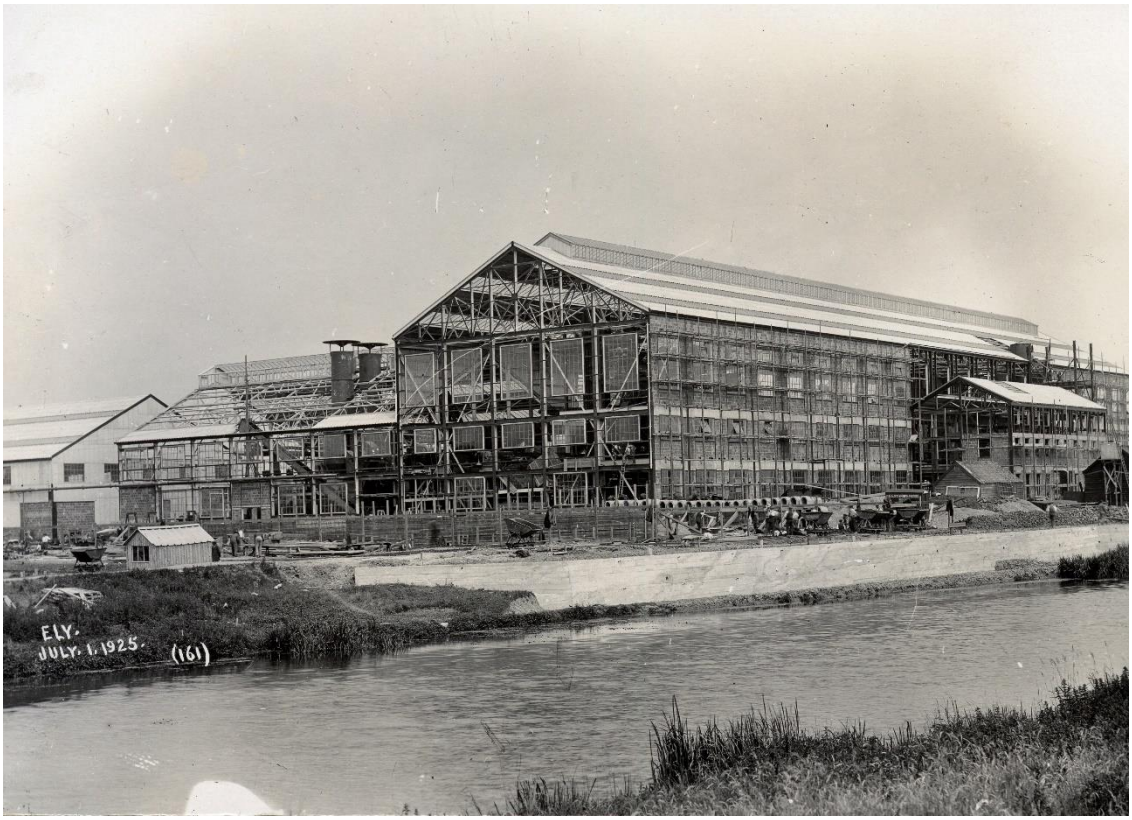
JULY. 1. 1925,
(160)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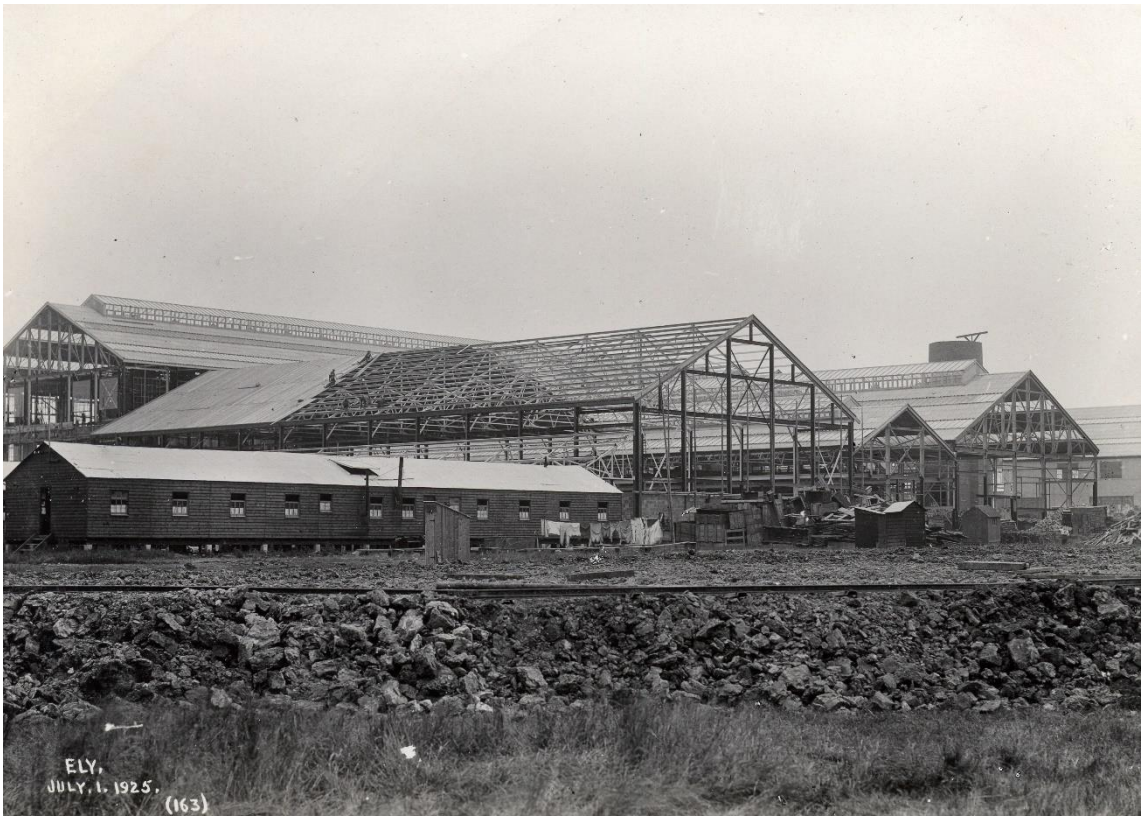
JULY. 1. 1925.
(162)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(164)

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JULY. 8. 1925.
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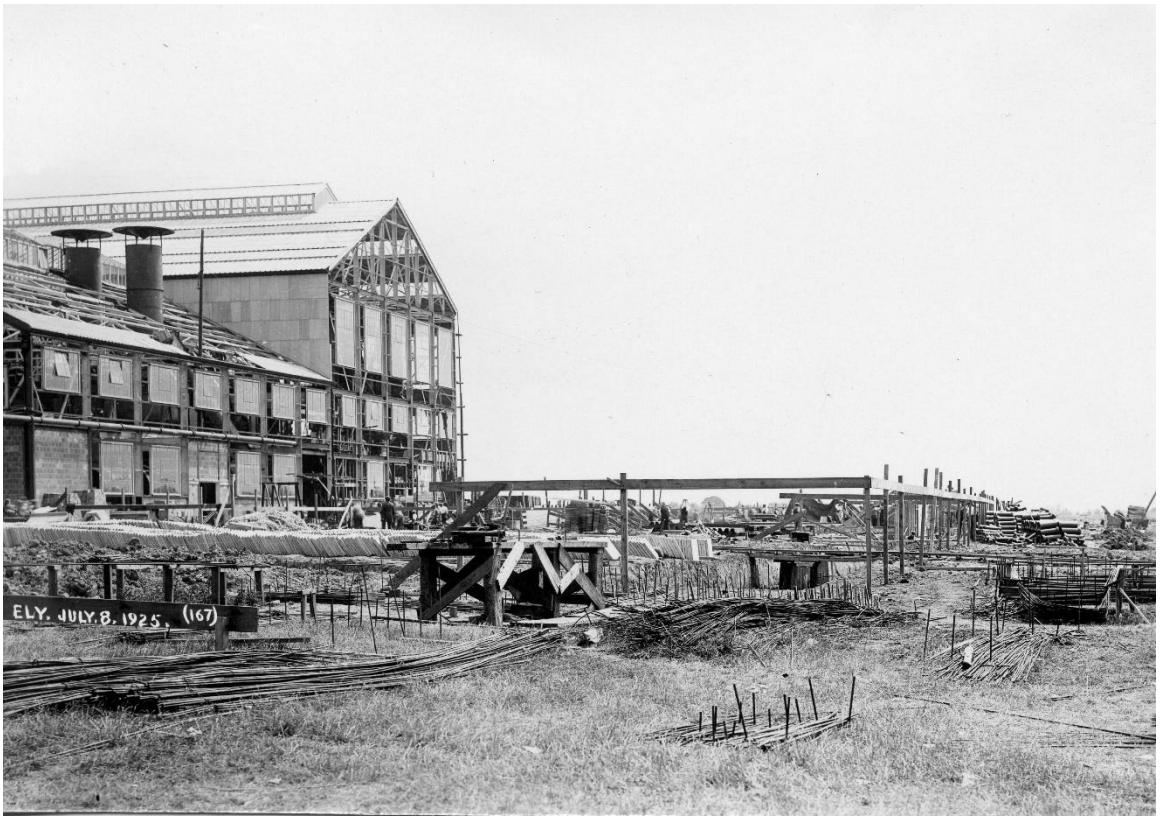
JULY. 8, 1925.
(166)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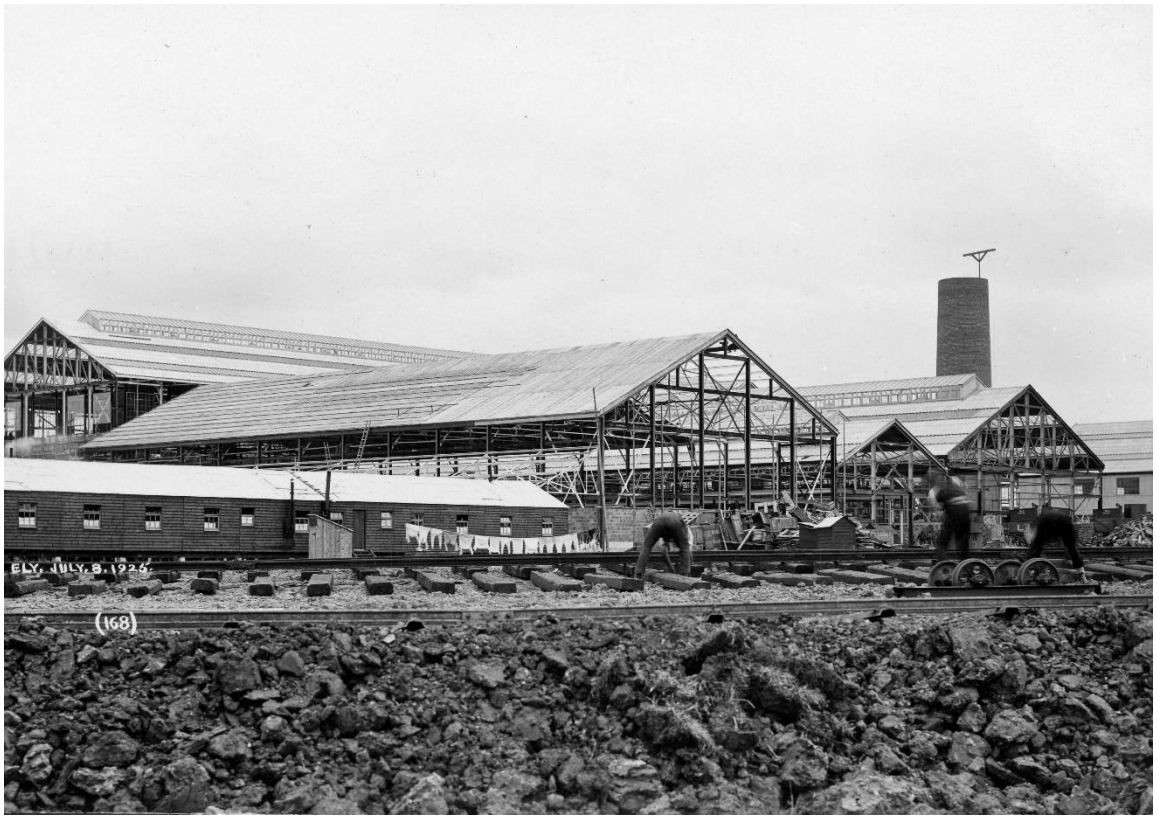
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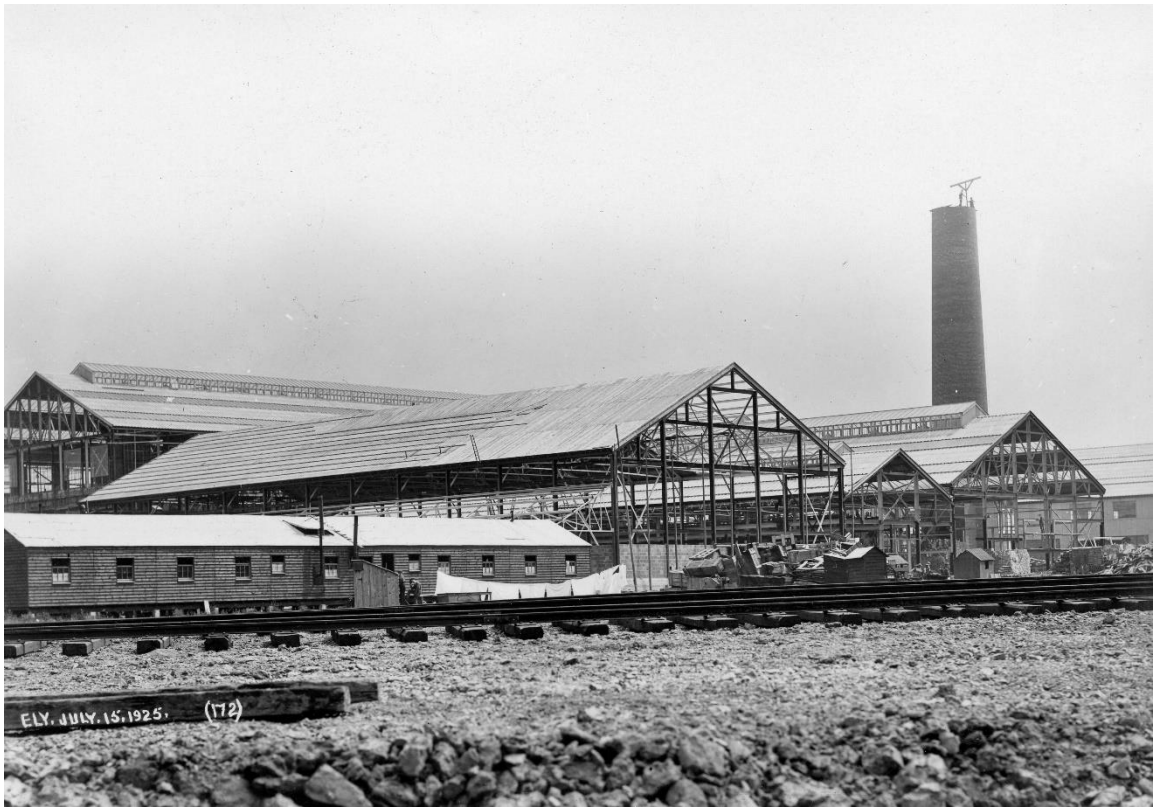
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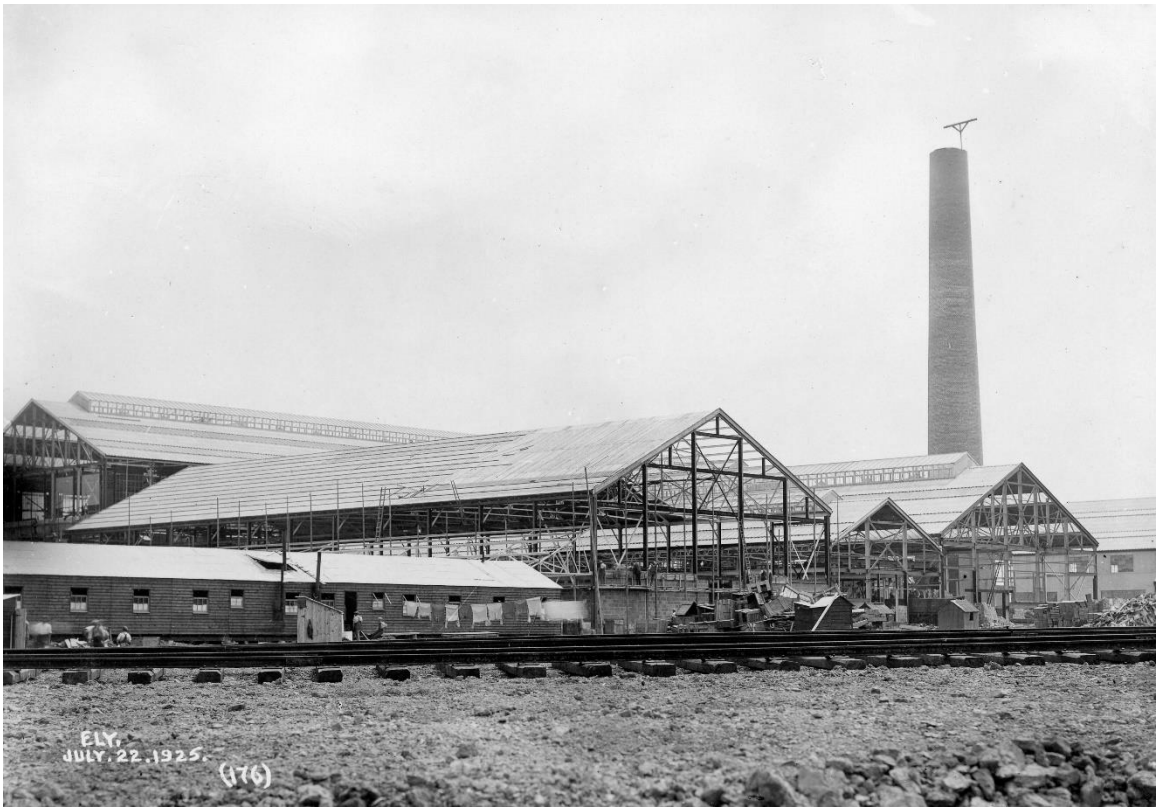
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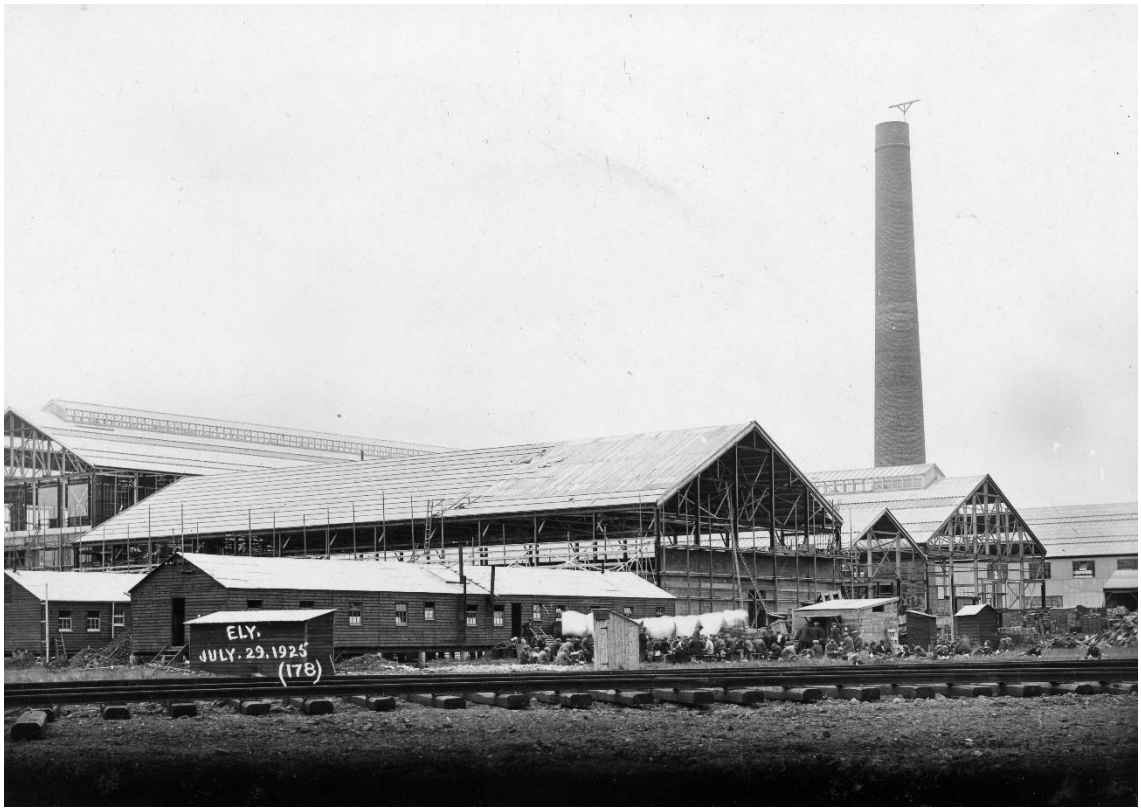
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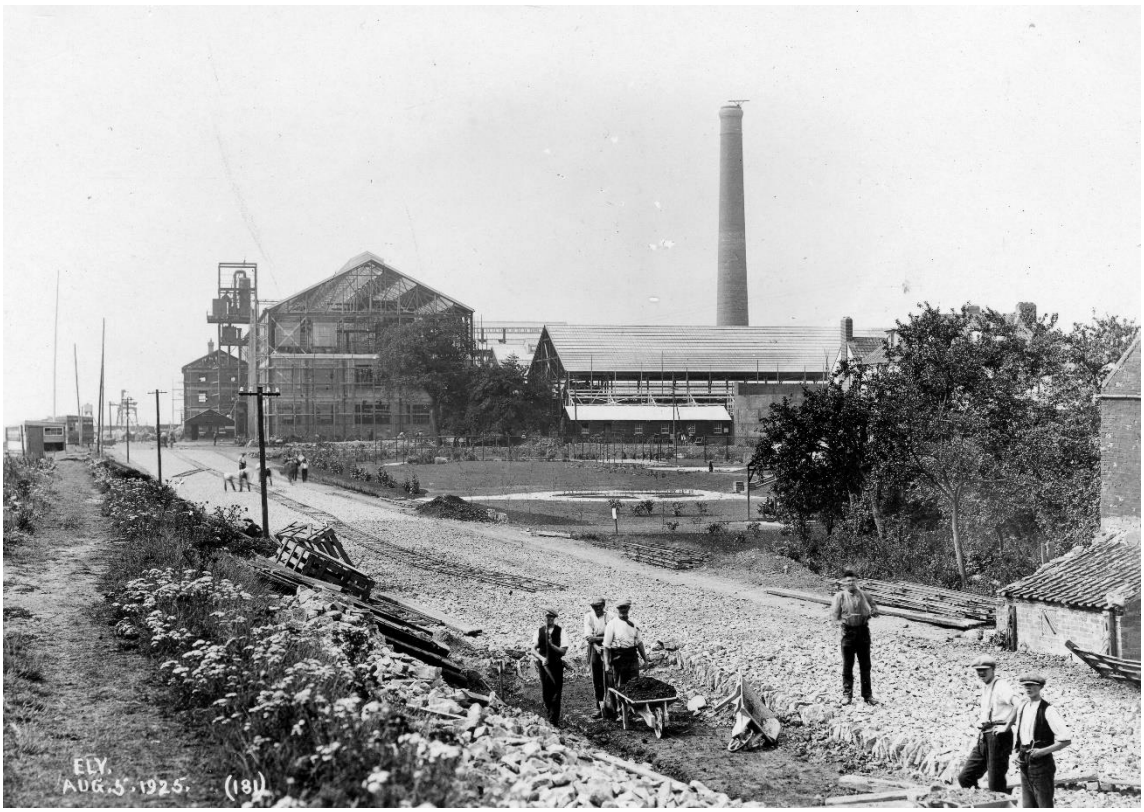
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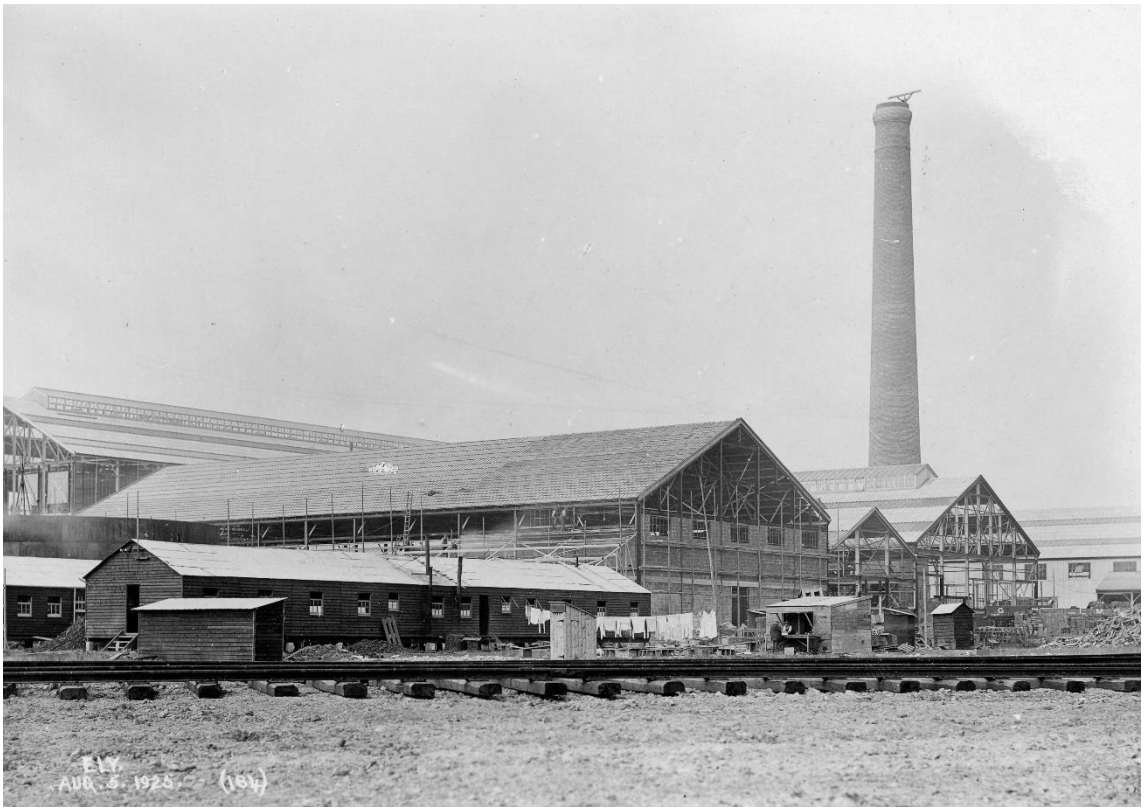
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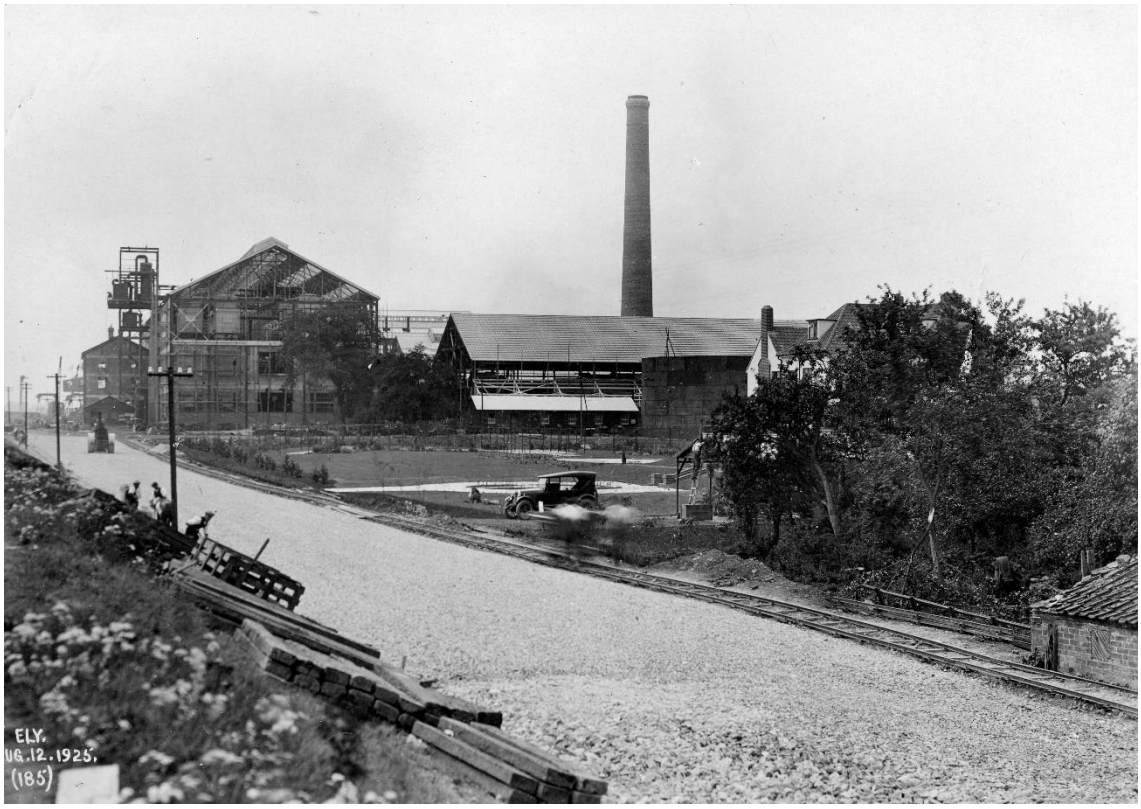
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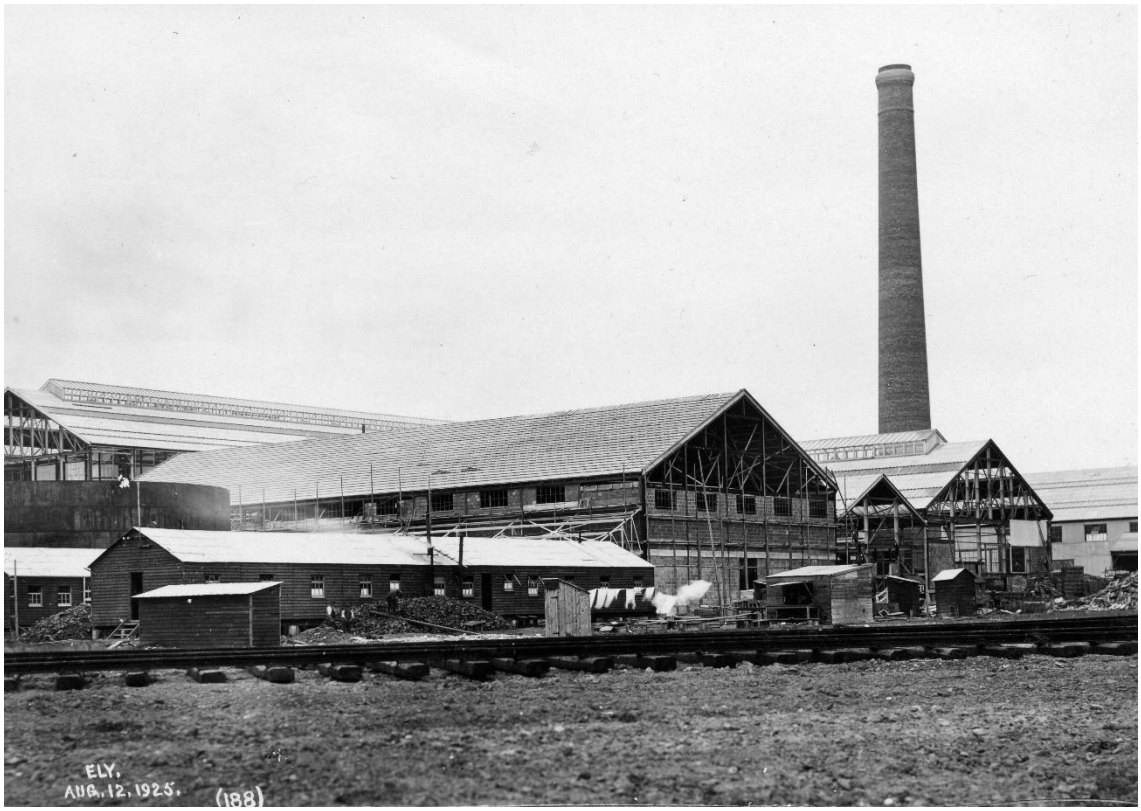
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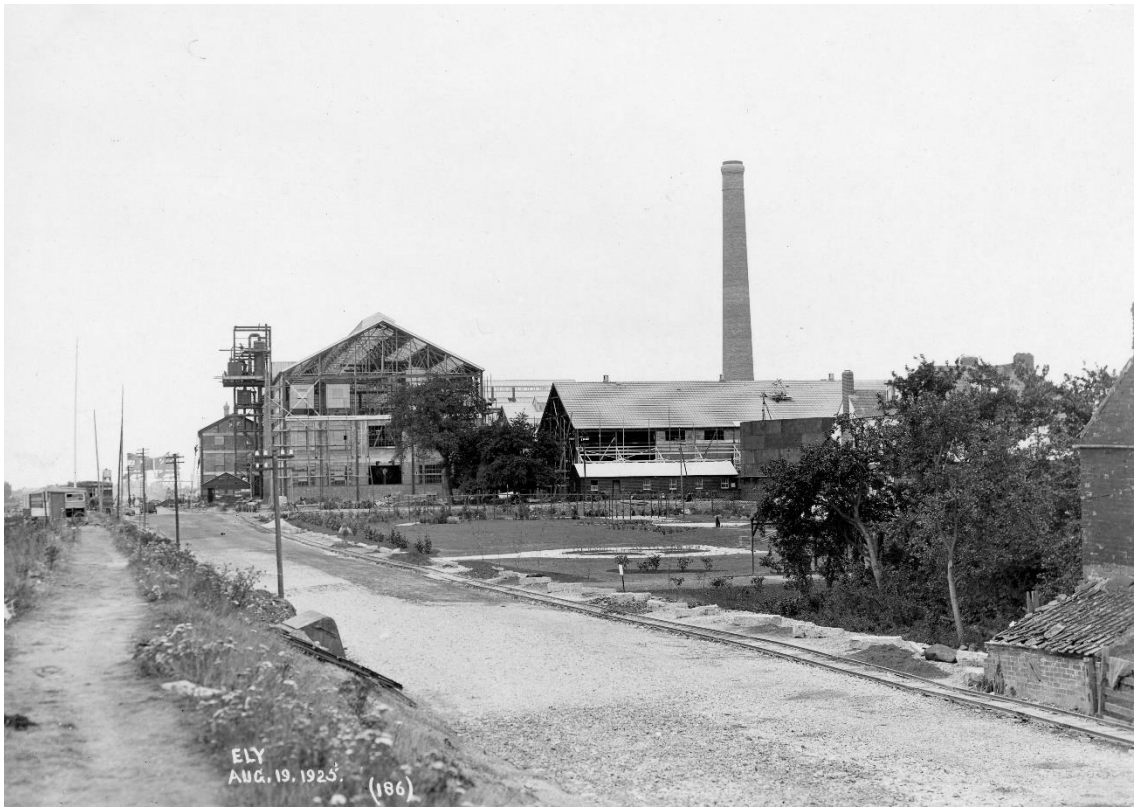
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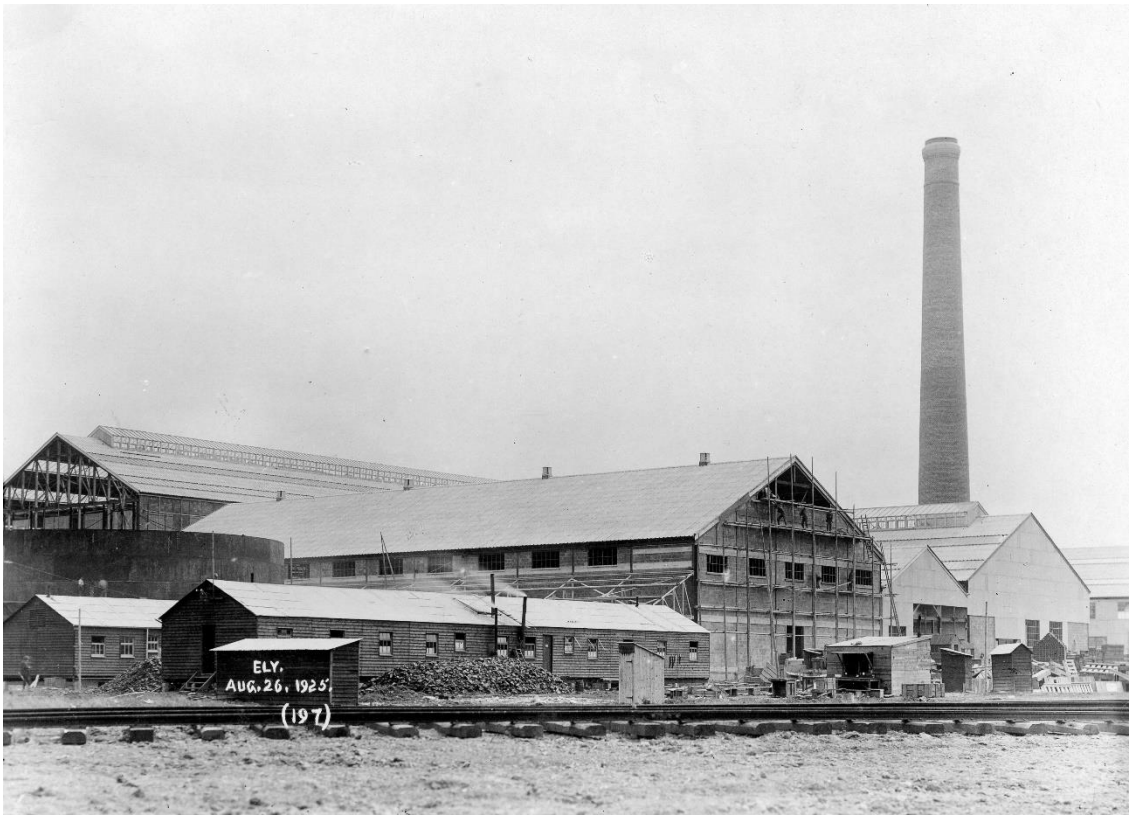
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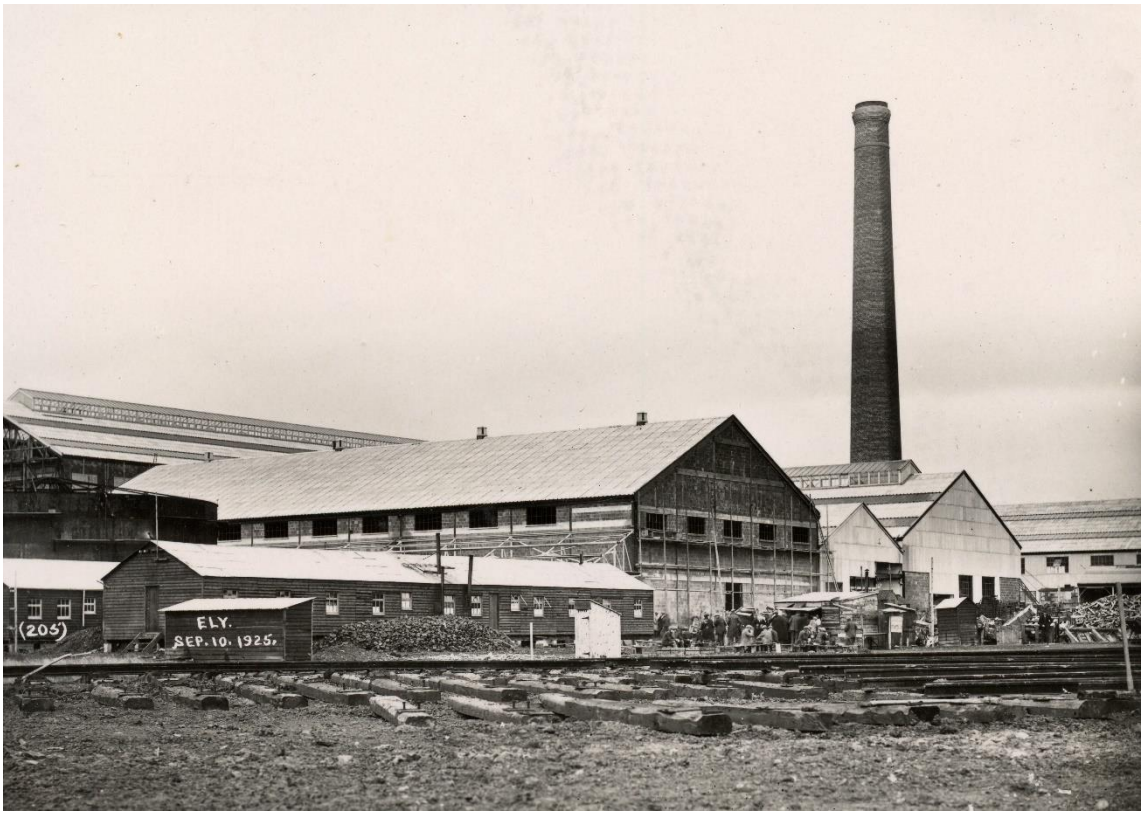
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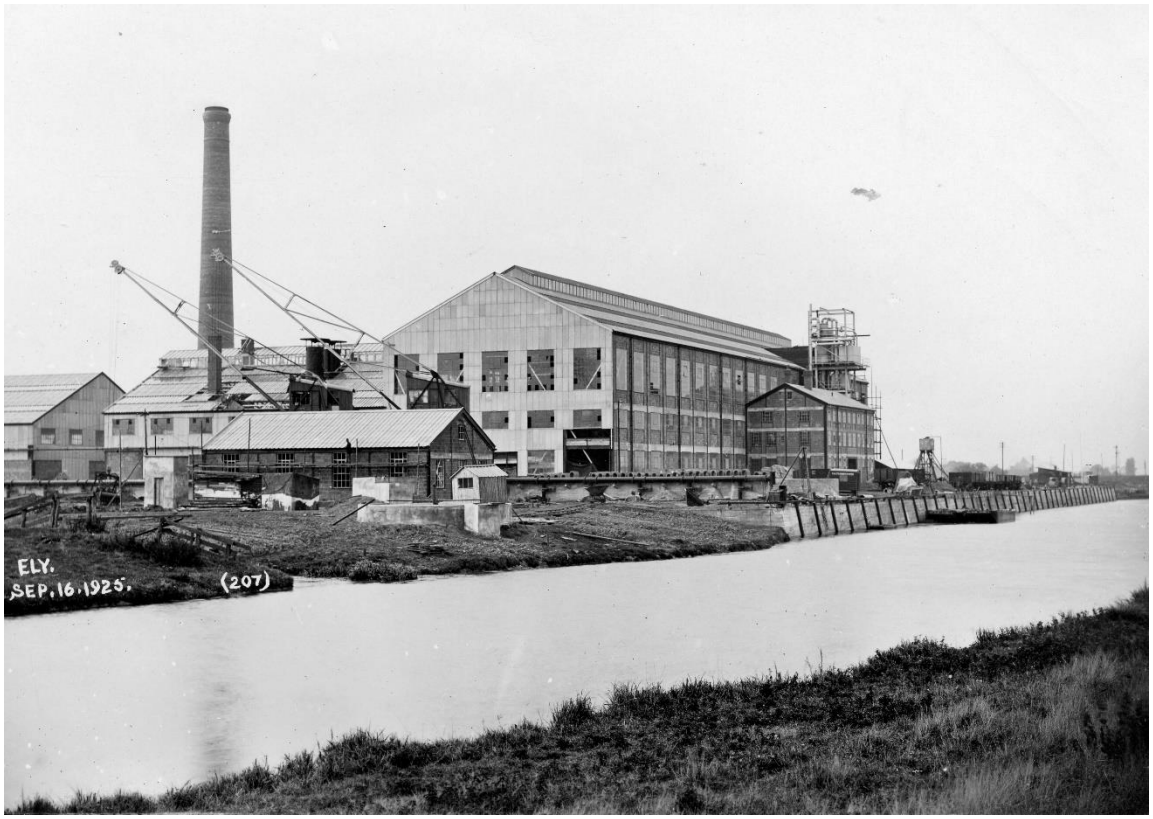
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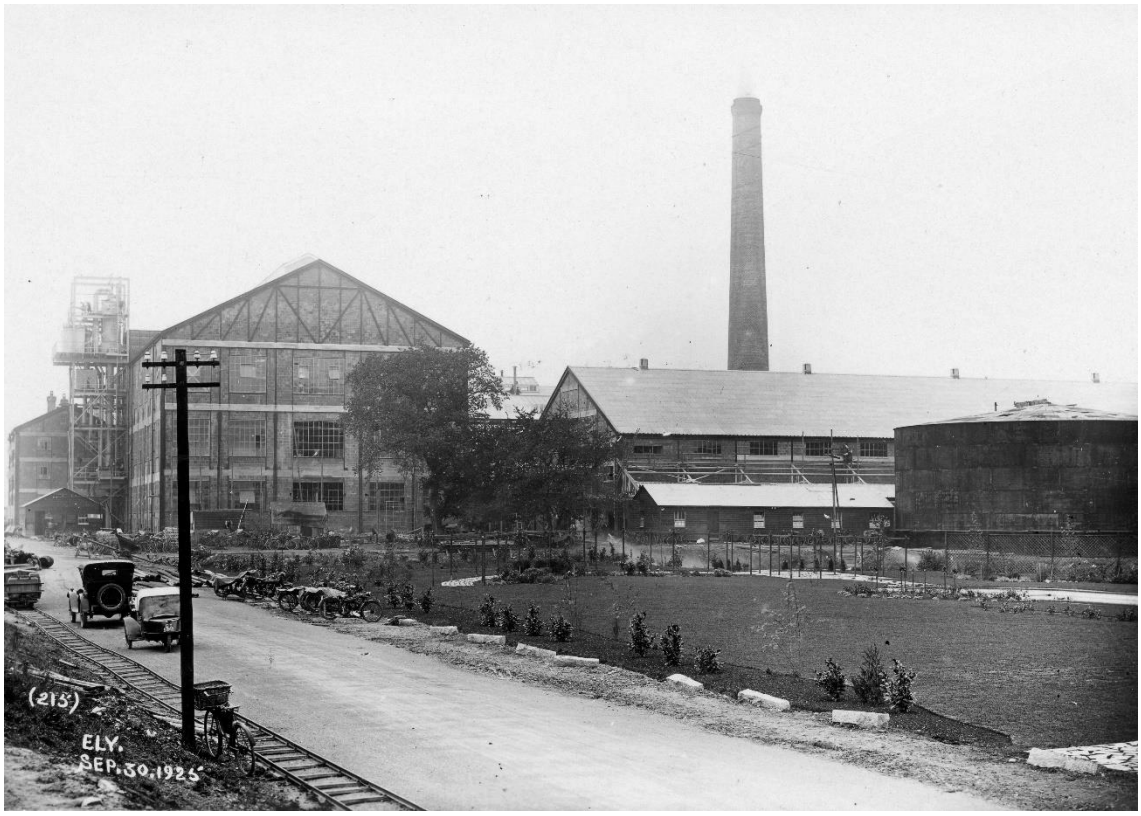
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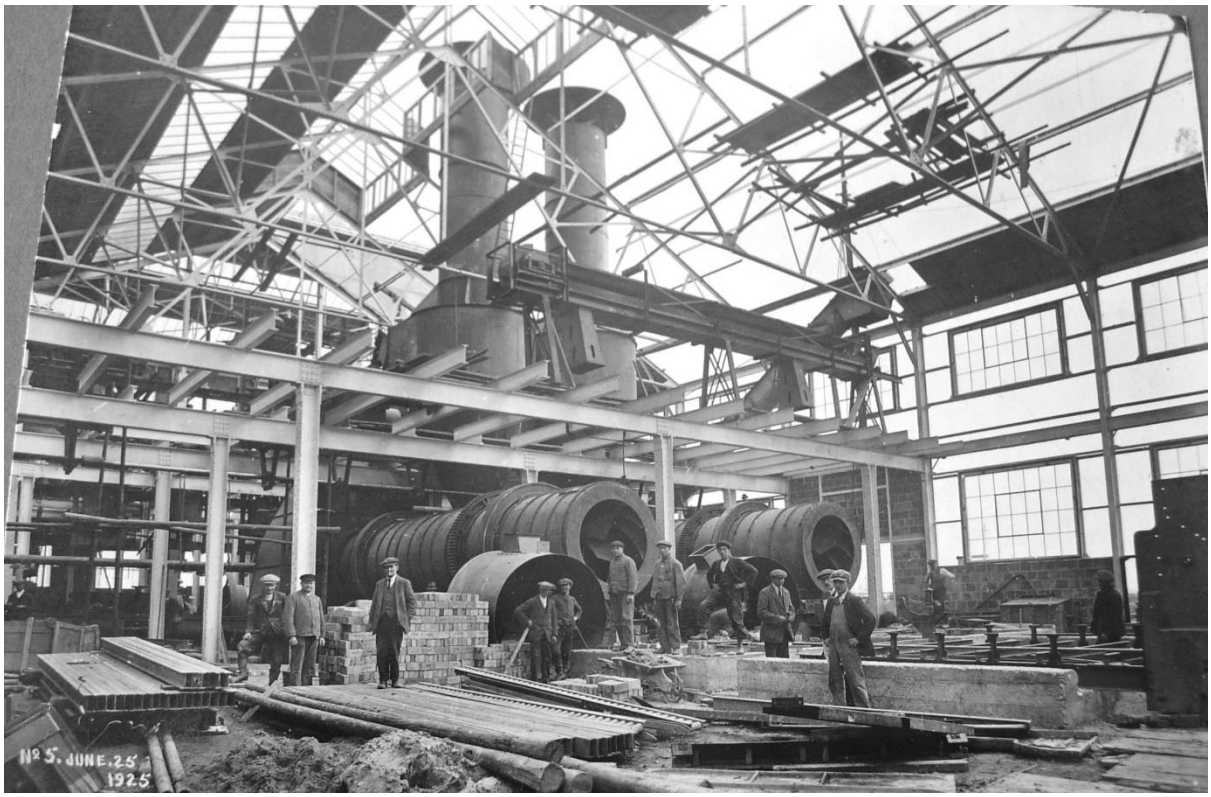
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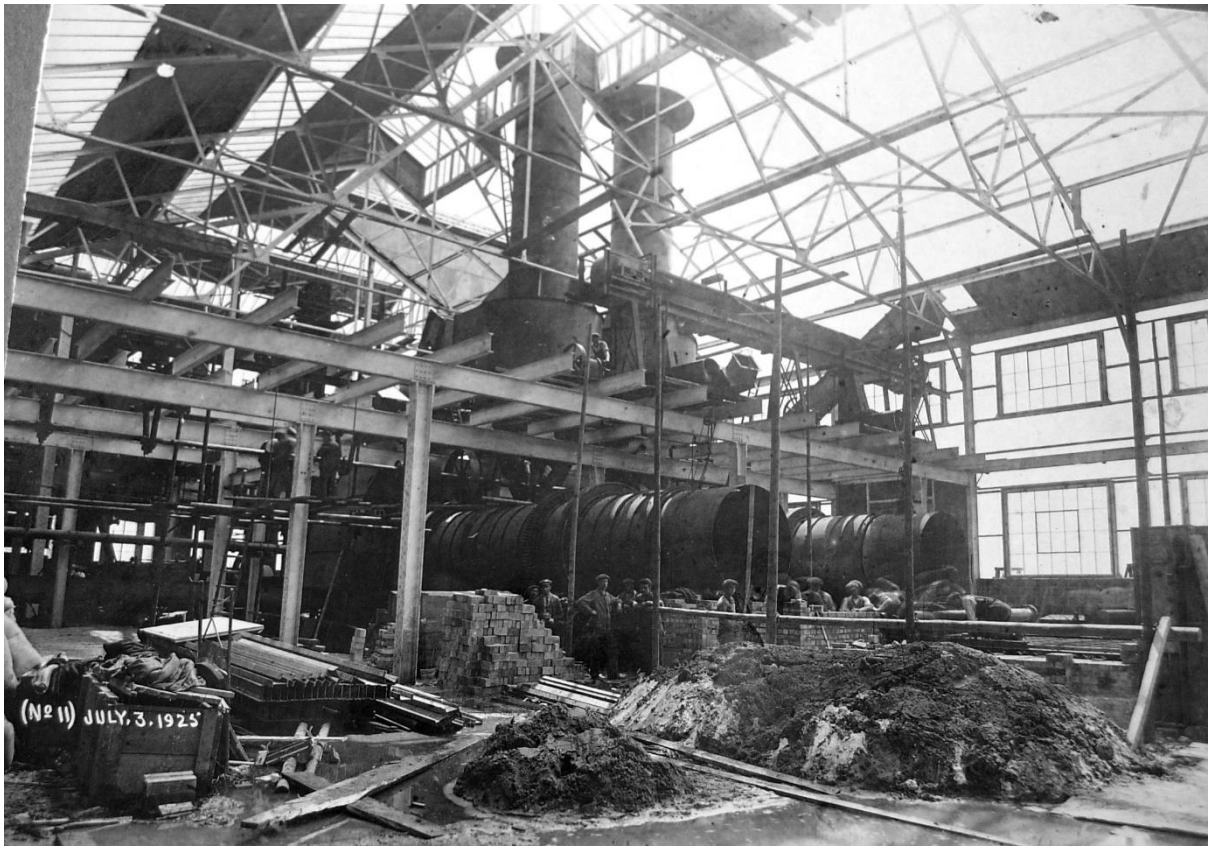
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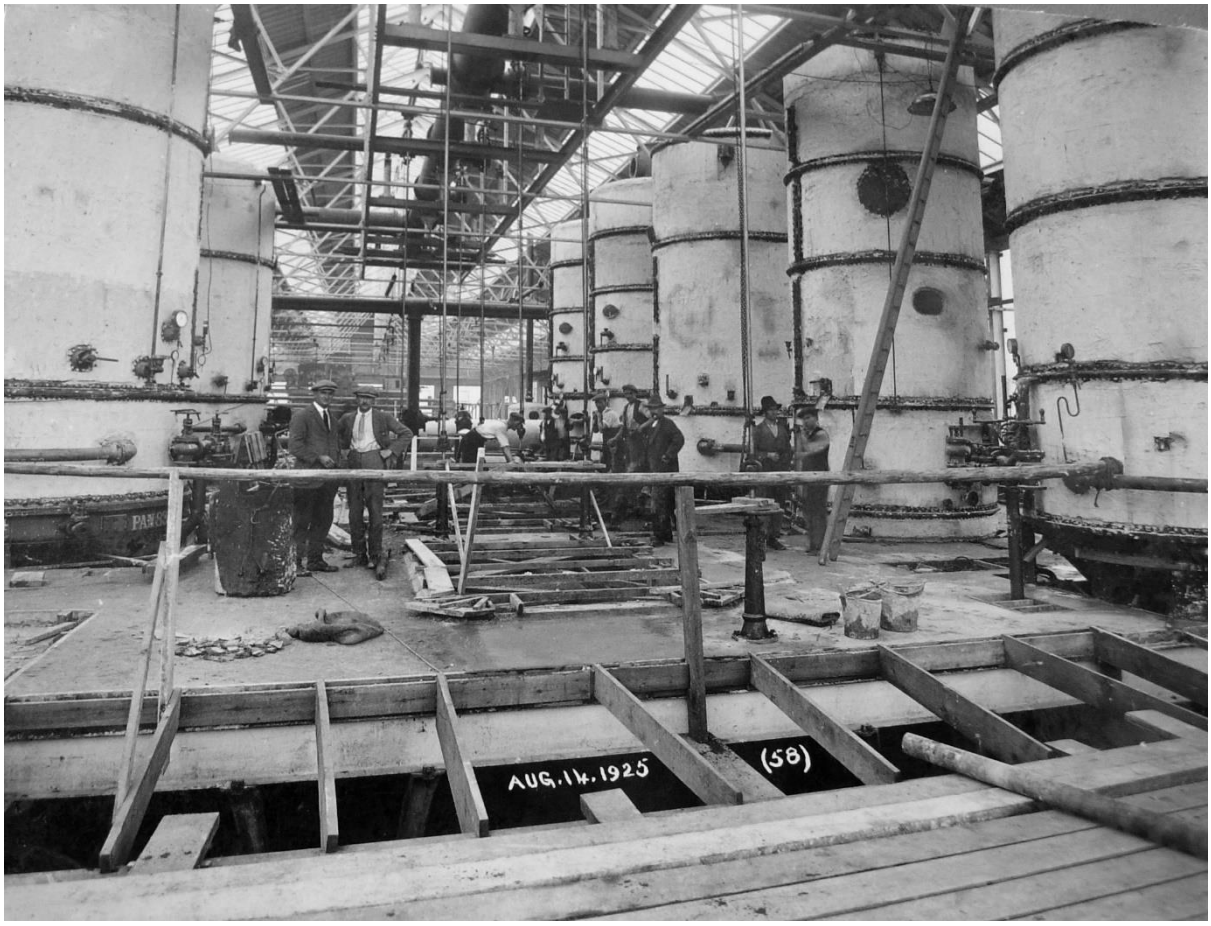
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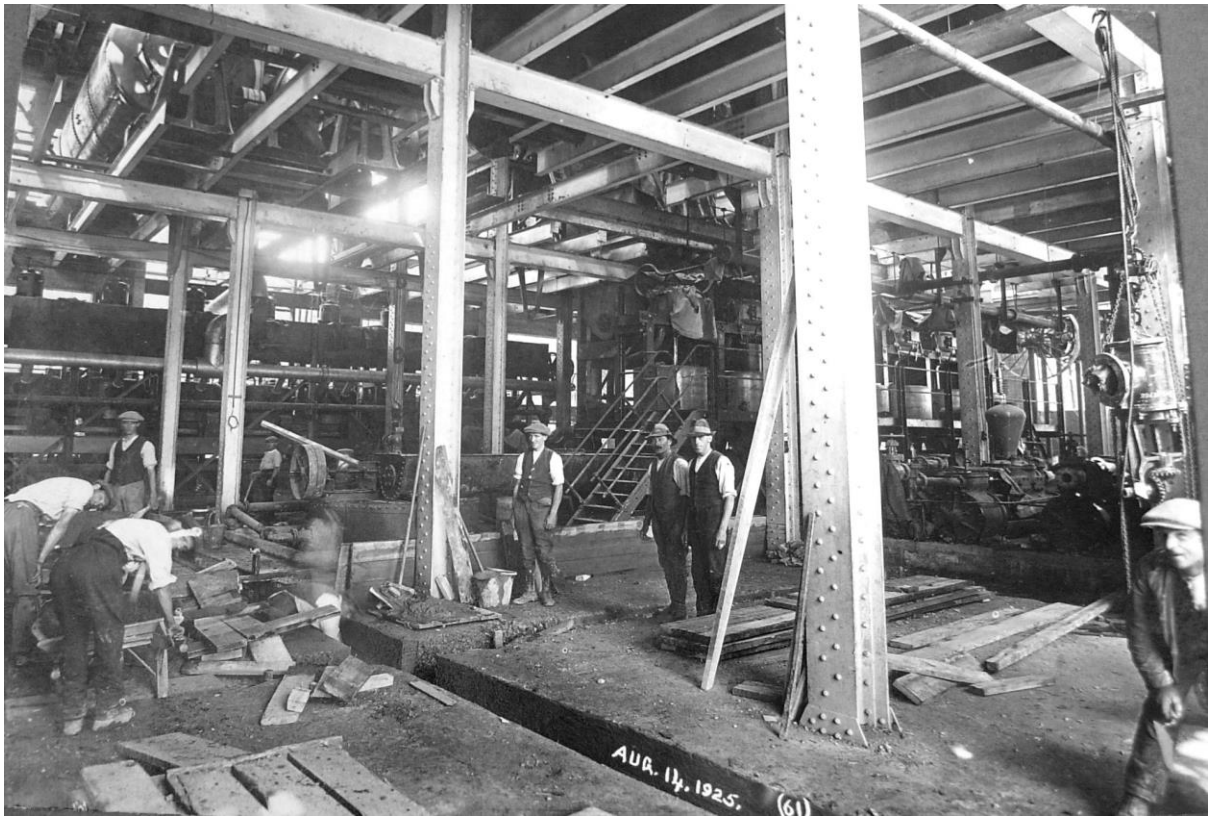
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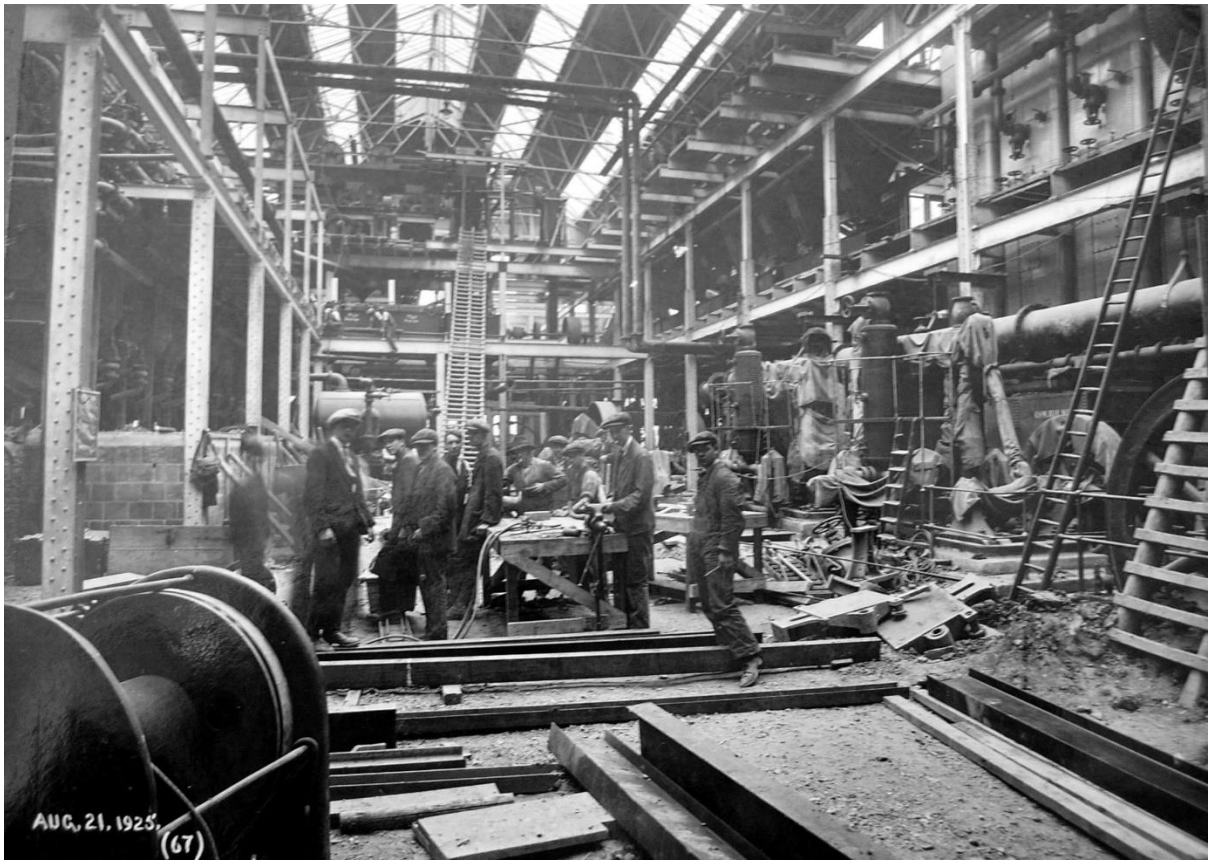
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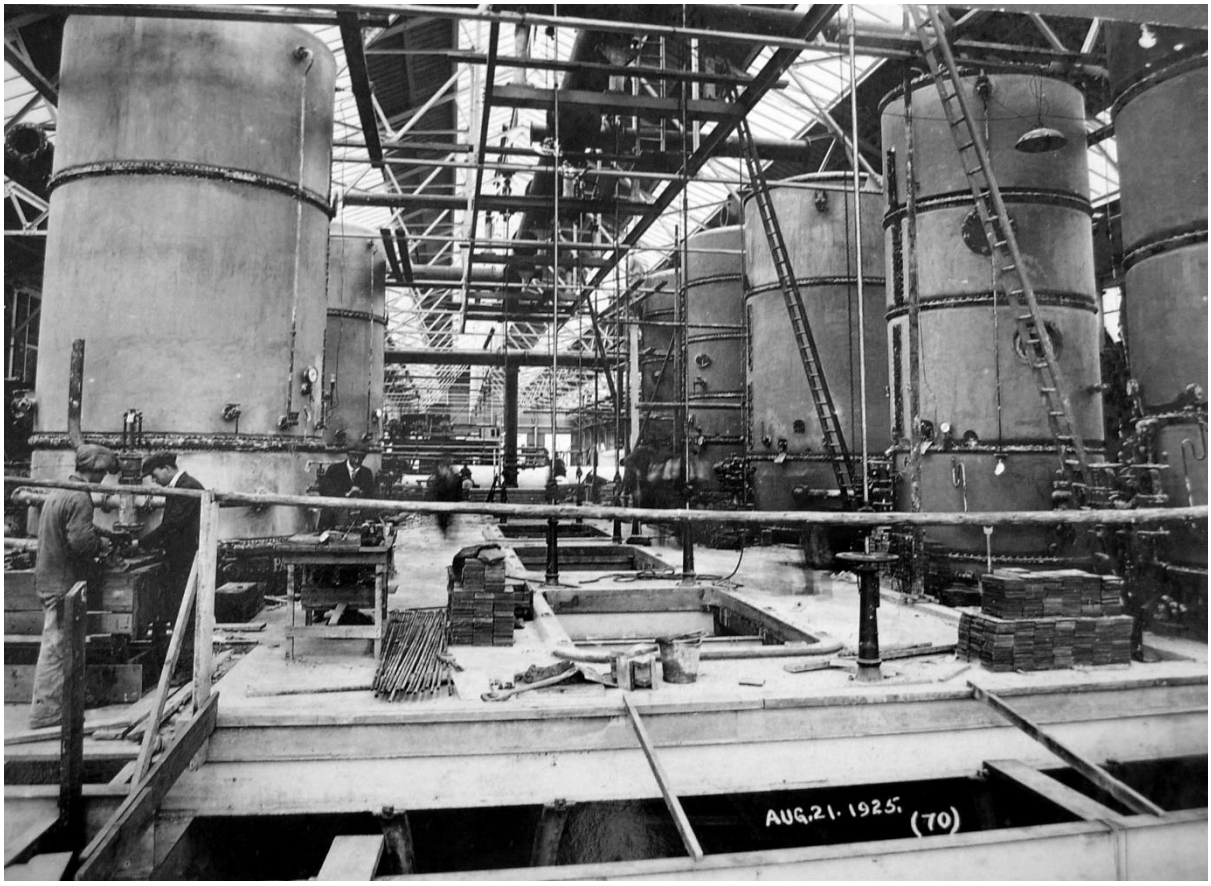
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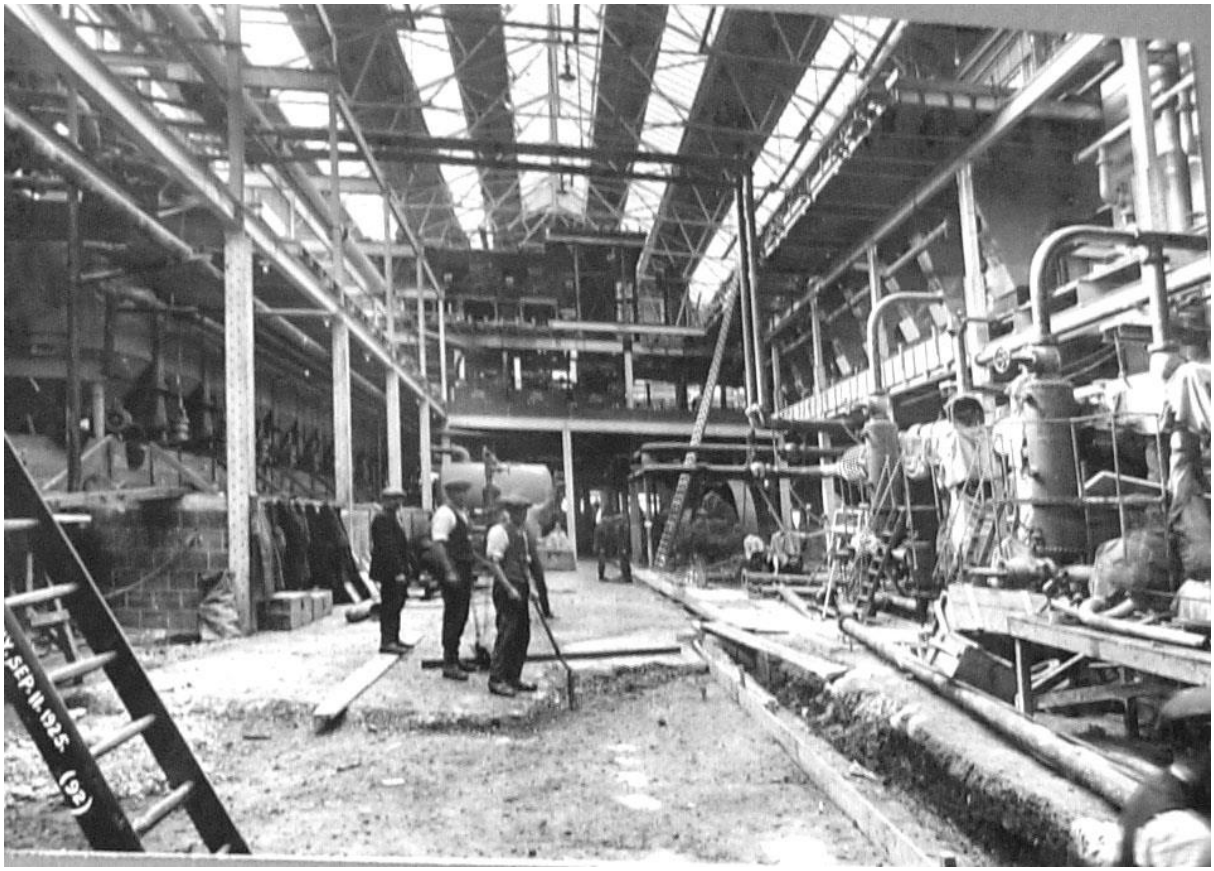
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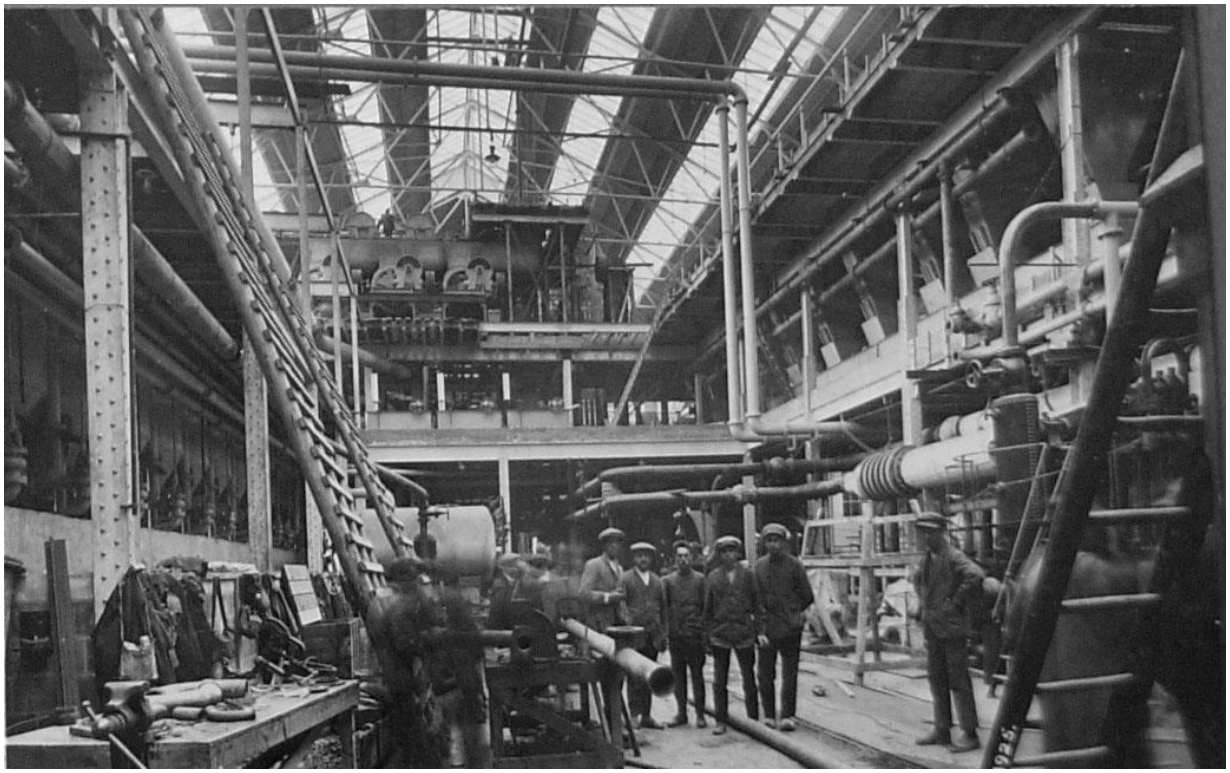

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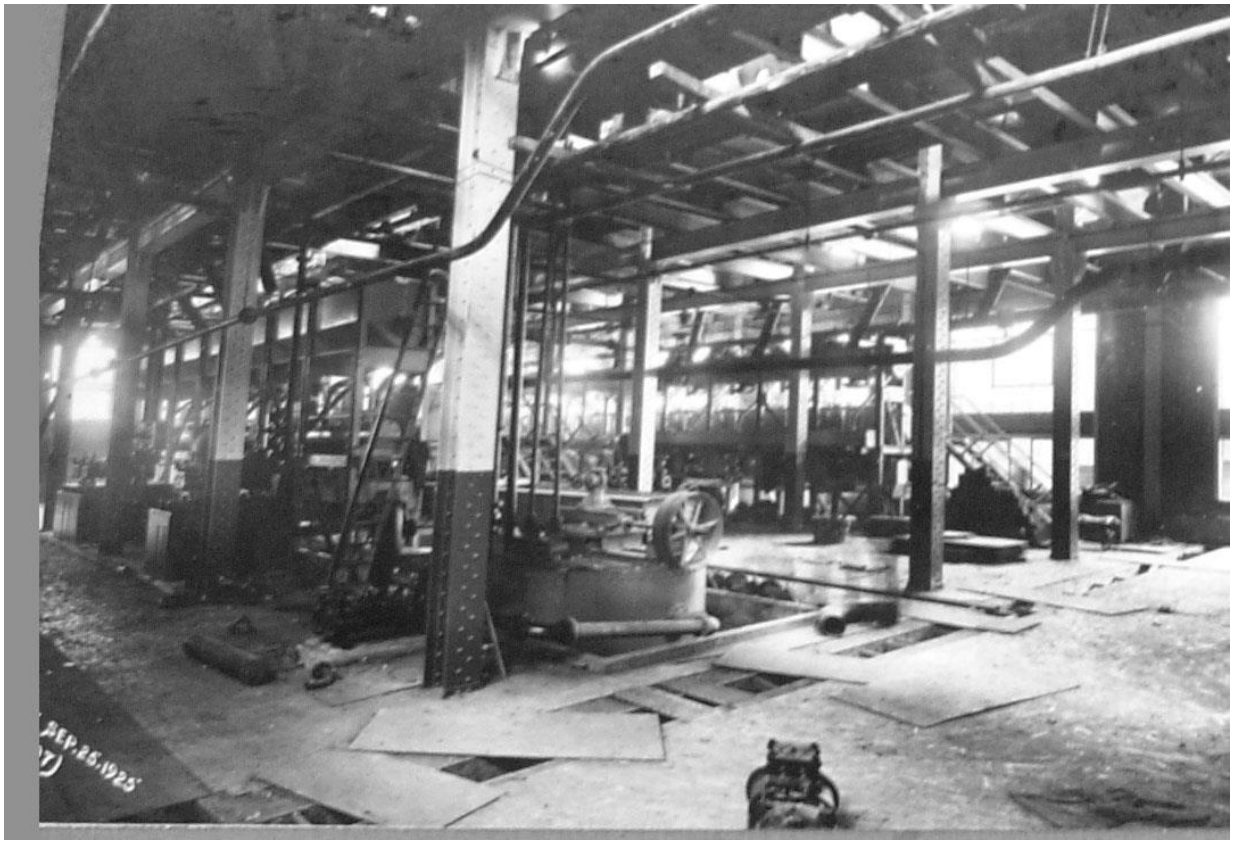
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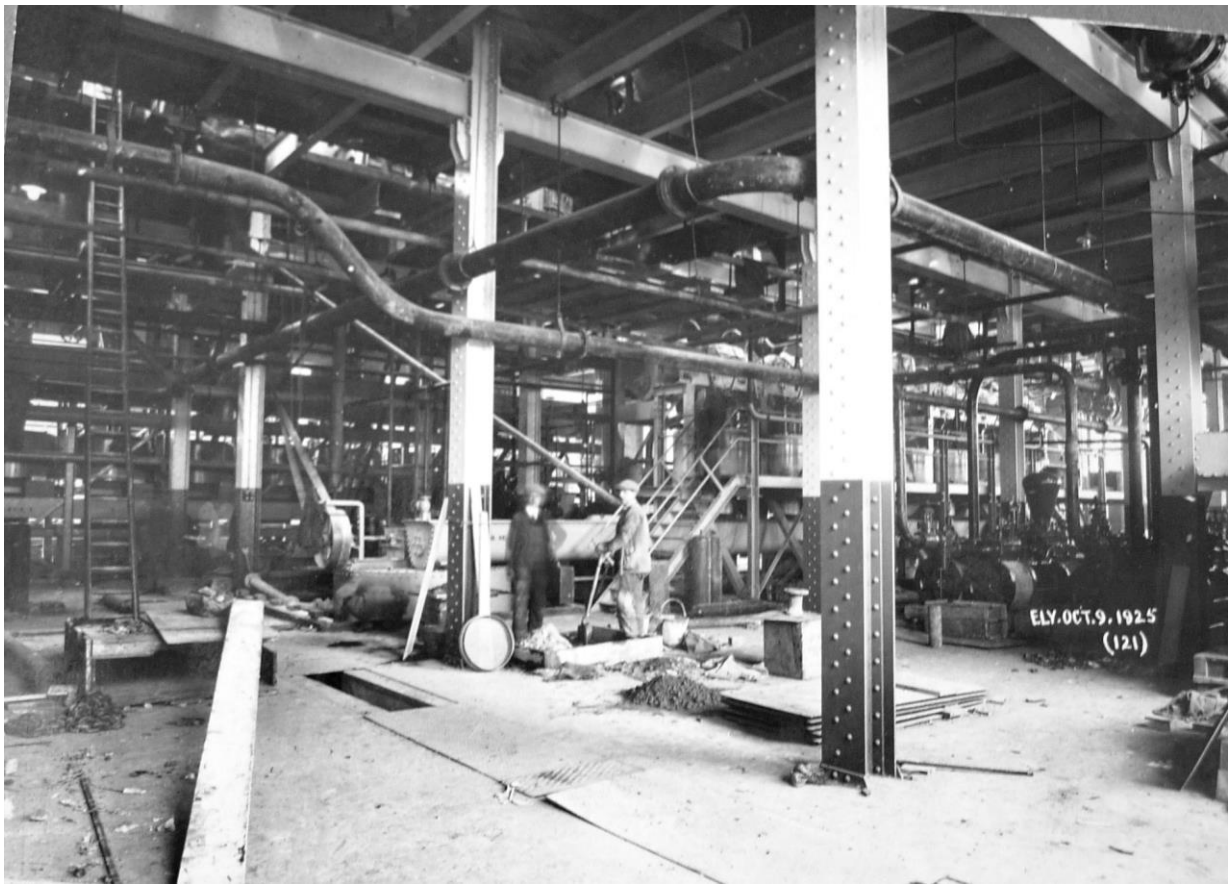
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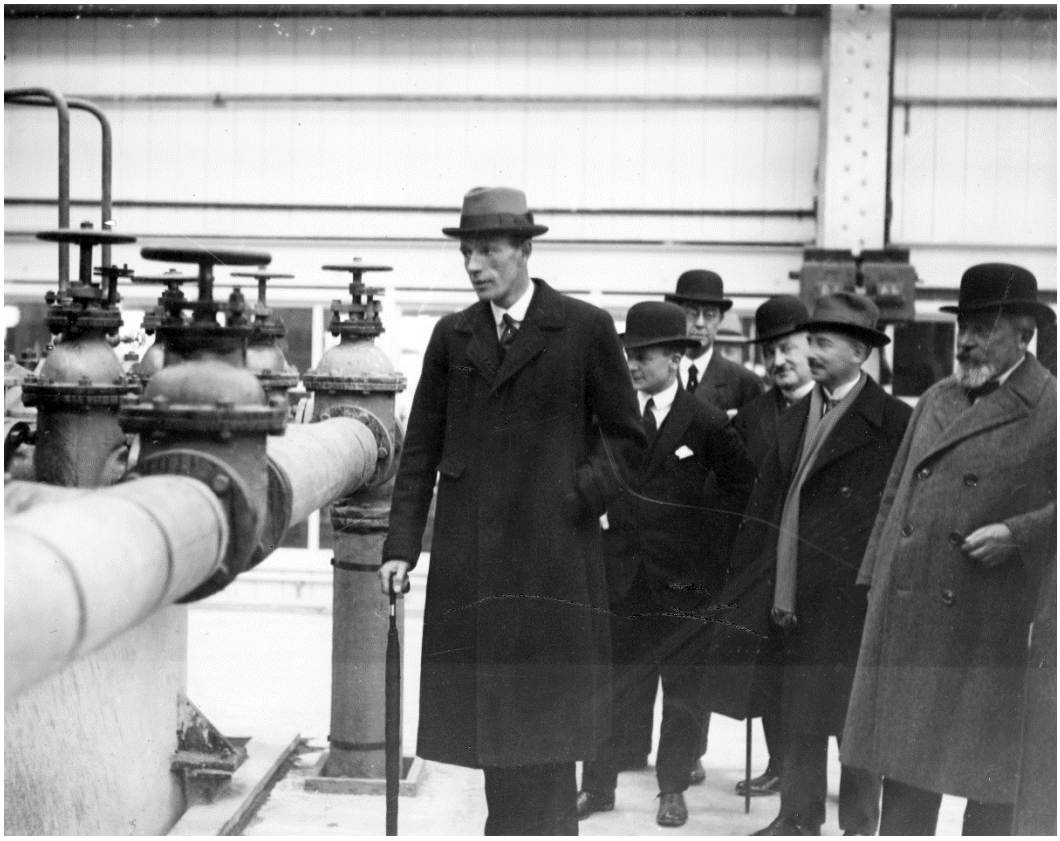
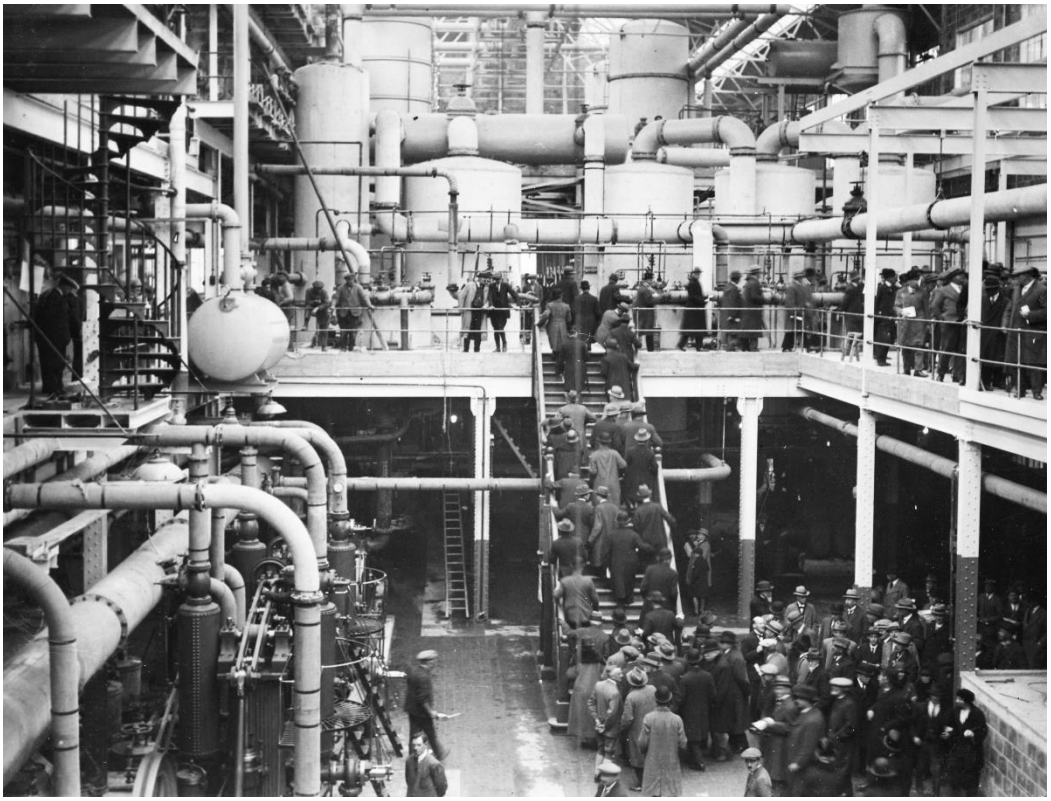
Thursday, October the 15th. The official opening of the Factory.





# The Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited.

## SPEECHES

*at the Official Opening of the Factory by the Rt. Hon. Edward F. L. Wood, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, on Thursday, 15th October, 1925.*

The Chairman of Directors, SIR JAMES MARTIN, said: We have received letters of regret from the Prime Minister and Mr. Churchill on account of their inability to attend this opening and there is also a letter from Mr. Noel Buxton which I will read. He says: "As I am still subject to Doctor's orders I very much regret I cannot accept the invitation to attend the Opening of the Ely Beet Factory on the 15th inst. I hope this will mark the beginning of an era of success for the Sugar Beet Industry in this country, which, in its turn, should bring lasting benefit to the agricultural community." I have also received a letter from the Lord Bishop of Ely addressed to the Minister of Agriculture, in which he says: "I am very sorry I cannot be at the Opening of the Sugar Beet Factory to-morrow. We are a simple and small community at Ely and I take a great deal of interest in local events. It is a real disappointment that I am not able to join in welcoming you on this important occasion. I have a long standing engagement to speak on a special subject at the Chelmsford Diocesan Conference."

On behalf of the Directors of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited I desire to offer you all a cordial welcome and I am sure that everyone here will join with me in offering a special welcome to the Minister of Agriculture, The Right Honourable Edward F. L. Wood, who has so kindly come down to declare this Factory open. I need hardly remind you that the beet sugar industry in this country is of recent establishment and that before the War there was only one Factory operating, namely, at Cantley. Since then two other factories have been erected, at Kelham and Colwick respectively, and this, Ely Factory, is one of the six new Factories which were promised in connection with the passing of the British Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925, the Anglo-Dutch group, of which we form a part, taking upon itself the responsibility for the erection of three Factories out of the six. We are proud of the fact that to-day you are attending the inauguration of the first of these new Factories.

The British Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925, received the Royal Assent on the 27th March last, but relying on the adoption by Parliament of the policy towards the industry of successive Ministries we got to work twelve months ago, that is over five months before the Bill became an Act. Before I pass away from the Act I would like to say how much everyone in the industry is indebted to the Minister of Agriculture and to his colleague, Lord Bledisloe, for the manner in which they piloted the British Sugar (Subsidy) Bill through the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectively. The Minister had to consider many interests, agricultural and industrial, commercial and financial, and above all the interests of the public both as taxpayers and consumers. Speaking in the presence of Members of Parliament representing all shades of political thought, I am sure they will agree that the Minister fulfilled his many sided responsibilities to the satisfaction of everyone concerned.

The Ely Beet Sugar Factory is built on the banks of the River Ouse. It is one and a half miles from Ely Station and is at the junction of a number of railway lines. The total area of the Factory site is 66 acres. Four miles of railway sidings have been installed to deal with the beet traffic and silos covering an area of 50,000 square feet have been constructed for the receipt of beets which come in by rail, road and by water. For the reception of the water-borne beet and for other purposes a wharf has been constructed 650 feet in length with a depth of water sufficient to accommodate the largest barges which can be used on the river. We have our own fleet of 50 barges and we claim that one of our services to the community is an organised attempt to restore the use of some of the waterways with which this country abounds. Thus we have four methods of getting the beet to the Factory—rail, motor traction, horse traction, and carriage by water.

The area covered by the Factory buildings is 2¼ acres. The main building is 360 feet long by 82 feet wide and is 52 feet high to the eaves. Behind it, but attached to it, are six separate buildings, consisting of :—

1. The Pulp Drying building with a floor area of 9,500 square feet ;
2. The Power House building with a floor area of 4,800 square feet ;
3. The Lime Building with a floor area of 4,800 square feet ;
4. The Boiler House with a floor area of 16,000 square feet ;
5. The Repair Shop with a floor area of 9,600 square feet ;
6. The Sugar Store with a floor area of 16,000 square feet.

The Dried Pulp Store is a detached structure behind the Pulp Drying building and has a floor area of 13,500 square feet.

A house has been built for the Manager. For the accommodation of other members of the staff three houses and a bungalow have been constructed as well as a pair of cottages. A spacious and fully equipped canteen has been built for the employees.

The capacity of the Factory is 1,200 tons and to run a full campaign we can deal with 120,000 tons of beet. We do not expect to reach that capacity for the first season, but we have the satisfactory number of 1,179 growers practically all of whom are within 20 miles of the Factory. The output of sugar ready to be placed on the market when the full capacity of the Factory is reached should not be less than 15,000 tons.

Now I want to say something in regard to the relation of this industry to employment. During the building of this Factory the average number of men employed in building operations and the erection of machinery has been nearly 1,000 and our wages bill on the site, apart from wages in Engineering shops, has amounted to £100,000. Although under the arrangement with the Government which was made previous to the passing of the Act, a good deal of the Machinery in this Factory is of Dutch origin, the number of British firms who have supplied machinery, apart from building material, is not less than 77. During the Factory campaign now commencing we shall employ 500 men.

The Board of the Ely Beet Sugar Factory Limited is composed of six Directors, three of whom are Dutch, Mr. J. P. van Rossum, Dr. A. Wijnberg and Dr. J. A. Van Loon, and three are English, Col. Sir George L. Courthope, Bt., M.P., Sir Frederick Hiam and myself. We have also associated with us as alternate Directors to two of our Dutch friends, The Rt. Hon. George H. Roberts and Mr. W. A. Ward-Jones. Our Secretary is Mr. Alfred Wood, F.C.A., who has made the Beet Sugar Industry the objective of his professional career. Speaking for myself and my English colleagues, we are delighted to be associated with our Dutch friends in this Ely enterprise, which owes everything to the initiative, energy, technical ability and financial resources of Mr. Van Rossum and his two able co-adjutors. I have heard now and again some mumblings in regard to Dutch influence in this industry. Let me just analyse the position for a minute. Mr. Van Rossum and his friends have come over here with their great technical skill and have shown their faith in the British Government, in British architects and builders, in British labour and British farmers by finding practically the whole of the capital for this Factory and by giving us that technical skill and direction without which a new industry for this country cannot have a reasonable prospect of success. What I wish to say on the matter is this, that our Dutch friends entertain a better view of us than we appear to have ourselves. If I construe aright the representation which is presented to the world by our pessimists, a large part of the nation appears to be playing, while another equally important part seems to be loafing. This is not the view our Dutch friends entertain of us and it is not the proper view. We have asked you to come here to-day to see what can be done for industry by co-operation between all the interests concerned. Everyone has worked with a will. We have had no disputes or labour troubles worth talking about and there has been complete co-operation between Dutch and British engineers and architects. Farmers around us have responded to our call although we want them to grow more and more beet. The Government has fulfilled its part of the bargain and we hope that the Minister of Agriculture will give us such a send-off that we will be able, at the end of our first season, to give a good report in regard to this addition to the production at home of a further instalment of the nation's food supply, instead of having to send our money abroad in order to bring it in.

In conclusion, I must mention the valuable services which have been rendered in connection with the building of this Factory by Messrs. Hal Williams & Co., the Factory Architects, and by our able and indefatigable Factory Manager, Mr. Willemstyn, whose personality is a source of inspiration to all concerned. To him, to Mr. Blount, our Commercial Manager, and to all engaged we give most cordial thanks.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, THE RT. HON. EDWARD F. L. WOOD, M.P., said: The first word that I think I ought to speak in the discharge of the duty that your kindness has laid upon me, that of declaring the factory open, would be to express my own personal thanks to the Directors for their kindness in having invited me to come and perform the ceremony, and in doing that, for having made me one of their favoured guests on this occasion.

It affords me particular pleasure to be able to accede to their invitation in that I thereby gain the opportunity of congratulating, as I would wish to do, and as you would wish to do, those who have been responsible for what I cannot but think is a very wonderful creation within the short space of twelve months. I also welcome the opportunity of finding myself on this occasion presided over by my friend, Sir James Martin.

We may, I think, claim that we are to-day a very representative gathering. We have here representatives of the various manufacturing groups concerned with this sugar business. We have representatives of those who grow the beet, and we have representatives also, in the President and Vice-President, of the National Farmers' Union, and also I understand, representatives of the Ely and Cambridge public bodies.

You, Sir, have reminded us of what has been the past history of events in this field. They have been through various stages. In the first place we saw great hopes aroused, but we saw disappointment following rather quickly upon the heels of hope, and it was not until we reached the second phase, with the passage of the Subsidy Act, that we were able to assure ourselves of a real prospect of a secure and successful establishment of the new industry, and in that connection I would like to add my testimony of gratitude to that which fell from the Chairman, to the work that was done by my predecessor at the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Buxton, whose restoration to health I hope we shall soon be able to congratulate him upon, and also our word of acknowledgment to the Government of which he was a member. The result of the efforts of the late Government succeeded by those of our own has been that we are in a position to-day to report a very definite progress of the whole national undertaking.

When I laid the proposals before the House of Commons in December last, I told the House of Commons that eight new factories were in contemplation, of which it was hoped six would be ready for work this Autumn. At the time that estimate was thought sanguine, but events on this occasion have been better than our hopes, and we now see not less than seven new factories opening this season. Seven, when I expressed a hope for six, and it is because Ely is the first of these factories to open that it affords me such particular pleasure to be able to come and take part in it. At least six more factories are in contemplation for next year; that is a very satisfactory beginning.

In 1925 we have an acreage under sugar beet of 55,000 acres. We have an estimated acreage for next year of something over 100,000 acres and that has been achieved by direct State help of a not ungenerous kind, acting in co-operation, and I emphasize this, with the men who for years have been dreaming dreams and were endowed with the faith that alone is able to translate dreams into practical action. I myself confess I am not a warm believer in subsidies in general. I have always felt that a subsidy, to be justified, must be justified on exceptional grounds, and must be able to show reasonable certainty that it will effect its purpose and the point I would like to emphasize in this connection is this, that the State has in this case a complete certainty that it gets equivalent value in production for every pound of subsidy it is called upon to pay, and in addition to that there are two particular reasons for which I think we may firmly assert that such action and such policy was justifiable. Let me remind others that the experience of all countries has gone to show that for the establishment of this industry some measure of early assistance was necessary and I am confident that in ten years' time we shall see the result in the secure establishment of it. The second reason was this, the need and the value of new crops and, maybe, new methods in our British Agriculture. I am told that in these Eastern Counties enquiries show that beet is, in many cases, the most profitable feature on the farm. I heard only the other day there was a cultivator getting something like thirteen tons per acre out of rather moderate fenland, and he calculated it left him a very substantial profit per acre of £5 or £6. That is a very real contribution to the arable question and I don't think it is extravagant to hope that in a good many cases on the lighter soils where corn growing may be unprofitable, farmers will find a substitute for that in growing beet, and that in other soils beet growing, by its residual values, will enormously help the production of wheat. I emphasise this to show to the public the value this new movement will be to the cause of agricultural employment and welfare, and one that will assist the smallholder and farmer not less than the large farmer. That is the general experience of its cultivation over continental countries and there is no

doubt that great importance also attaches to the point touched upon by the Chairman, especially in these days, when we look with interest at our trade balance, to the reduction in food imports and I cannot think there is anybody who will not welcome the opportunity of producing an increasing proportion of the foodstuff that is essential to every household in the land, but for which we have hitherto had to rely entirely on foreign importations.

I also have heard these grumblings to which you, Sir, referred about foreign capital. I think that to despise or resent foreign help and foreign capital is short-sighted and unjust. I come from a county, Yorkshire, which is supposed to be tight-fisted. If anybody came to me for improving my estate I would not mind where the money came from, especially if I saw advantages accruing to me. It is the same here and I make no sort of doubt that in years to come, when the industry is established, we shall look back to the part taken by foreign enterprise in its initiation, much in the same way as we recall the invaluable assistance rendered this country years ago by Flemish weavers, or by those ancestors of Mr. Van Rossum's country who drained our fenland and who left the name of Holland over one of the parts of Lincolnshire, thereby stamping for all time the authorship of that great undertaking.

It is very important in these matters that in this business, which I believe is a winner in agriculture and in the development of national productivity, we should secure and maintain the co-operation of all interests. There were differences of opinion between those promoting the movement and those interested in existing sugar refineries. I don't recall those differences of opinion now except to say that I would like to express my appreciation of the very sportsmanlike action of the old refiners since the Act was passed. They, so far as I know, have not retracted any of their previous claims but have taken up the new industry, and are devoting money and technical experience to it and the new Bury St. Edmunds, and the new Greenock factories are a tribute to the business acumen of that portion of our community. The engineering firms are also working with you and have been of great assistance.

From the excellent relations prevailing between factories and growers I would emphasize this, that I hope both factories and growers will regard the subsidy period, not as a period of an existence made tolerably comfortable by the dole of State support, but as a period of stern preparation for the competition which is to follow. Therefore, it will be important to cut down costs and devise and improve labour-saving movements, write down capital and create reserves, and do all the things necessary to put the business in a position to make sure of its standing, when the subsidy period draws to an end. I am glad to note that a Committee of experts has reported on the technical education for chemists and hope the factories will give that scheme their warmest support.

Both these interests—factories and growers—are essential to one another. The growers are the linch-pin of the whole thing and the industry can only grow as fast as the growers will produce the beet on which the industry depends. There is not much risk to it and yet I hear of growers hesitating to embark on it. Some factories have been unable to get their full acreage and I hope the opening of Ely and other factories will create such a wave of enthusiasm that farmers, great and small, will determine to take their share and make the whole venture a thorough and complete success. In some places there are, and have been, and will be again, labour difficulties, but I am satisfied of this, that those difficulties can, by thorough organisation and forethought, be overcome, and I hope on that ground hesitation will not be maintained. The present three years contracts, I think, are favourable to growers and the organisation of the Farmers' Union is a very powerful one and can be relied upon to secure very fair terms for those they represent.

While I would encourage every effort necessary to develop the business during the subsidy period I do think a word of warning is worth while with regard to the necessity of proceeding with caution in the choice of factory sites. You must and we must do our utmost to avoid overlapping. It is a very easy thing and it is a very tempting thing to have overlapping ; the farmer naturally likes to see a factory within ten miles of him better than within twenty miles of him, and in the same way a factory likes to cut in on an area where beet growing is familiar rather than into a new area, yet in the long run if that policy were pursued it would be ruinous to the interests of both factories and the agricultural producer. I am sure great care is needed to avoid that.

At the present moment the estimated European beet acreage this year is very little more than it was in 1924–5. Also there is no great increase in the Cuban crop and therefore in view of the fact that the world consumption of sugar is increasing, from the point of view of foreign competition, prospects of this new industry are favourable.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate those who have been instrumental in promoting this movement. While I wish them in the cause of British Agriculture and all that it represents, warm success, I hope and believe that all sections of the community will be well advised and willing to do everything they can to promote the prosperity of this new industry, which, in its turn, may bring great help to our trade and bring great help and restore new hope to our British agriculture.

Col. Sir George Courthope, Bt., M.C., M.P., said: My privilege this afternoon is to move a vote of thanks to the Minister of Agriculture for opening this factory. It does not require much from me to commend this vote to you, I am sure of that. Your very presence here to-day is proof positive of your appreciation and your show of feeling towards the efforts which this industry has made and the encouragement to it the Minister of Agriculture is giving to it and to us by his presence and speech here to-day. He has completed, I might almost say constructed, an edifice of government assistance to this industry, the foundation of which it is true was laid by his predecessors, but he has done the work. It is he who put the Sugar Subsidy Act on the Statute Book and not easily or without effort, and he is putting the final touch to his work of encouraging this industry by coming down here this afternoon. I am particularly grateful myself and I know there are some of you who share my gratitude that he should have come to declare this factory open because it is a factory built by what is commonly known as the Anglo-Dutch group. Both the Minister and the Chairman have referred to the unfair criticisms which have been made at times of the efforts of Mr. Van Rossum and our other Dutch friends to establish this industry over here. They have not only been criticised but unfairly handicapped in their work by that criticism, and that gives me cause for special gratitude to the Minister that he should have come to this factory to-day. I think it is right and proper that it should be known, not only by you, but to the public through the kind medium of the Press that the establishment of this infant industry in England has been worked for, cared for, toiled for, by a number of people, and by none more strenuously than our friend, Lord Denbigh, whom I am glad to see here. The whole of the efforts would have fallen to the ground and been fruitless, and we would have no factories in England to-day but for the express and essential courage of Mr. Van Rossum and his friends. He gave the first of our factories at Cantley, when all efforts to obtain British capital had failed. When the second one was on its beam ends Mr. Van Rossum came and put it on its feet again. When the question of the subsidy depended upon guarantees being given for six factories Mr. Van Rossum guaranteed three out of the six. This is one of them. I need not say more because I have made a good case to show what Mr. Van Rossum has done. I can imagine no greater service that any Government or organisation could render to our country than for them to make it worth while for foreigners, who have capital, to invest it over here for the employment of British workmen. For this special reason, as well as for your very kind and encouraging speech to-day and for the tremendous assistance you, Sir, have given to all of us who are working for the sugar beet industry in Great Britain, I beg to move a most hearty vote of thanks to the Minister for his speech.

Sir Frederick Hiam, in seconding a vote of thanks to the Minister, said: As Sir George Courthope has said, we are all pleased to see the Minister here to-day and to know that he is out to help not only this industry but all farmers in general. Sugar beet can be grown successfully on all classes of light soil, especially if the growers pay strict attention to singling at the proper time and keep continually hoeing and cleaning the crop. Our agricultural engineers are busy bringing out new implements for lifting the crop, and I do not see any difficulty in getting the crop raised. However. this is only part of the work, and in my opinion the most difficult problem is the carting of the crop, Often in November we get heavy rains, and it then takes double the horses to get the beet crop from the land. I find in France the growers get their crops off the fields as early as possible, making huge dumps on the railway sidings so that the beets can be readily loaded in the trucks as and when required. In Holland they make these same large dumps by the side of the canals. Now I ask our Railway Companies to give more consideration to the English grower and to give more siding accommodation, and not concentrate all their energies on helping the foreigner, or I warn them that the roads and rivers will get the traffic.

I would also like to say that lately I have read a great many letters in the Press about the decline of English farming, particularly because we do not grow as much wheat as we did 50 years ago. We never shall again. English wheat to-day is 10s. less per quarter than Canadian and it does not pay to grow. It is the one crop that we have to sell for less money than our competitors. We command the best price for barley, oats, potatoes, carrots, and all vegetables, therefore why grow wheat? To-day we feed 50 millions of people with potatoes and fresh vegetables, also provide them with their new milk. Double the foodstuff is grown in the locality to that which was grown 50 years ago and four times the

amount paid in wages. Wheat growing to-day only employs one man, where ten were necessary in the olden days when the reaping was done by hand. Sugar beet growing will employ seven times more labour per acre than wheat growing. There are in this district several thousand of acres which will not grow wheat or any cereals successfully, but it will grow sugar beet and rye. Therefore, I hope to see the acreage of sugar beet doubled this next season, and, as you have seen to-day, this factory is large enough to deal with it. Now is the time for the farmers to take advantage of the present good prices. Do not be nervous about getting your labour, as I have always found that wherever the demand is created the labour will always come.

Lord Bledisloe, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Directors, said: This day's programme has been a masterpiece of organisation and princely hospitality. To those who look for rural regeneration in this country, this is a red-letter day, and in years to come, I am sure, we shall look back on it with devout thankfulness to those who have organised this day's proceedings.

If there is any likelihood of overcrowding, such as Mr. Wood has referred to, I hope the spacious areas in the West of England will be remembered by those establishing such factories. They would be received in the west with open arms. Many people are hoping for an increase in the arable area. Under existing conditions, we should probably look, for a time at least, to a more intensive production from the existing arable land rather than an extension, and there is no crop that lends itself better to more intensive cultivation of British soil than sugar beet.

Mr. Rowland R. Robbins, C.B.E., President of the National Farmers' Union, in seconding the vote of thanks, said: I am very grateful of this opportunity of speaking of the hospitality afforded to us to-day by the Directors of this Company. We thank you most heartily, those associated with the Farmers' Union, and wish this enterprise abounding success. We can see you are a keen body of men, and we poor unsophisticated farmers are no match for you, but you have always met us reasonably. We wish you all the success you desire, and that when you have achieved the success which all hope you will attain, you will share that success with the farmers. I have great pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks.

The Earl of Denbigh supported the resolution and said: I want to congratulate the Directors for their hospitality to-day and also with regard to what has fallen from the Minister and from Sir George Courthope with regard to the introduction of foreign capital into this country. I would like to congratulate Mr. Van Rossum upon the pluck he showed in bringing the money into the country when the beet sugar industry was far less favourable than it has been recently. So far as there being any justification for grumbling in an industry of this sort, it is not only short-sighted, but also stupid, and if there are Englishmen who have not the pluck to put down their own money and foreigners come forward and do it and help British agriculture, all I can say is "let 'em all come."

Mr. J. P. van Rossum, acknowledging the vote of thanks, said: My colleagues and I on the Board of the Ely Company much appreciate your vote of thanks and the very kind way in which it has been expressed. Throughout the arrangements for this function we had treasured the hope that your visit would not only be informative but pleasant and comfortable as well.

You will of course realise that this factory is not only a new factory but it has only just started operations. For some weeks there will be constant tuning up. The first season in itself, to use one of your expressions, is only a "preliminary canter," as we cannot expect to get into our full stride until next season at the earliest.

Speaking on behalf of my Dutch colleagues and myself we very much appreciate the very kind remarks that have been made by the Minister, Mr. Wood, and by Sir James Martin and others. I think that the reason that we have been encouraged to continue all possible help to your new industry here has been our confidence in the fairness and justice which characterises British Governments in their relations with other countries. This fairness and justice has always been shewn to us by the Ministry of Agriculture, not only by Mr. Wood himself but also by his predecessor, Mr. Noel Buxton, and by the Permanent Secretary, Sir Francis Floud.

Therefore, Dr. Wijnberg and I have throughout wished to help you all we could, and now with the further co-operation of Dr. van Loon we are endeavouring to give you the best of our industry in Holland. In fact we take a pride in doing so. We would like to teach what we know to England because we have always believed that your country is a place in which a flourishing sugar beet industry

should exist. In Continental countries the sugar beet crop is most important for agriculture. I am therefore glad that despite its difficulties, financial losses and absence of State help in its beginnings that I built the Cantley factory, during which difficult times Sir George Courthope gave me his very valuable assistance.

I would also like to thank our English colleagues, not only of the Ely Company, but also of the Cantley and Ipswich Companies, including, of course, our able Secretary, Mr. Alfred Wood, for the assistance constantly and consistently given to us in dealing with the financial, technical and administrative problems of what is in fact a big enterprise.

This factory alone involves £400,000 of capital and a similar amount is involved in each of the other two factories to which I have referred, but we do not fear the future, even though the subsidy is gradually reduced, provided the farmers supply us with the necessary quantity of raw material and at the same time gain increased experience, as we gain ours, in reducing production costs by an increased output.

I am glad that representatives of all the other factory companies are present and I know that they with us have confidence in the farmers, not only because, though conservative, they are reasonable men, but also because we have confidence that the National Farmers' Union leaders will take a broad view of the difficulties and risks of the other party to the beet contract.

## LIST OF GUESTS.

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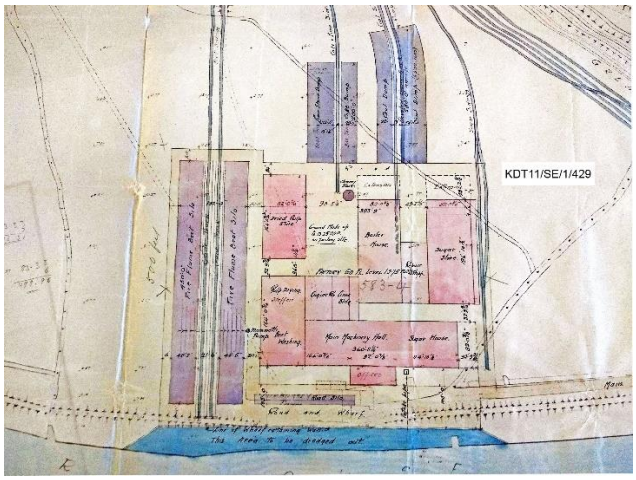
Potter Space Ely.

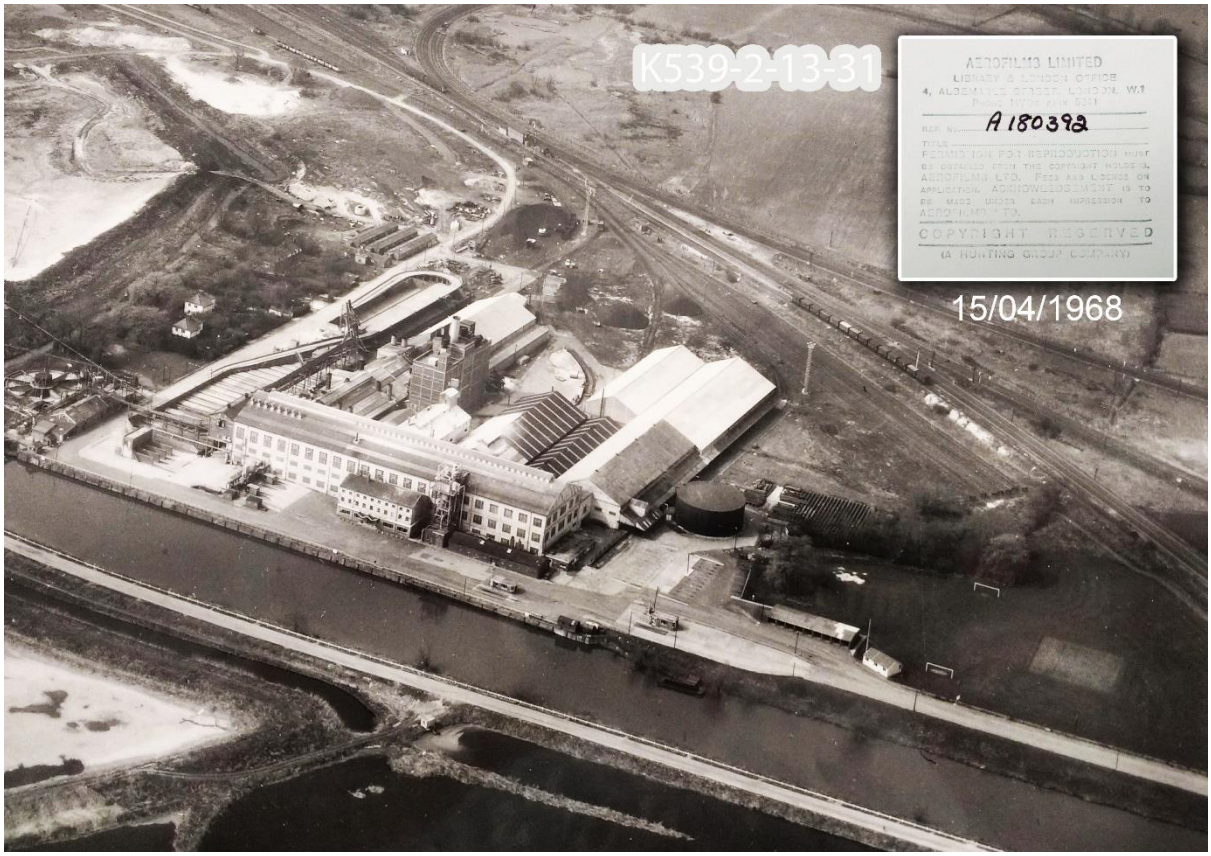
The following images were kindly supplied by Potter Space Ely, and also a January 1925 plan view and a 1968 aerial view, courtesy of Cambridgeshire Archives, as a comparison.

Potter Space is a commercial property company that owns, operates and develops five business parks across the UK, each connected by road or rail to major business arteries and offering links to our key cities and ports.

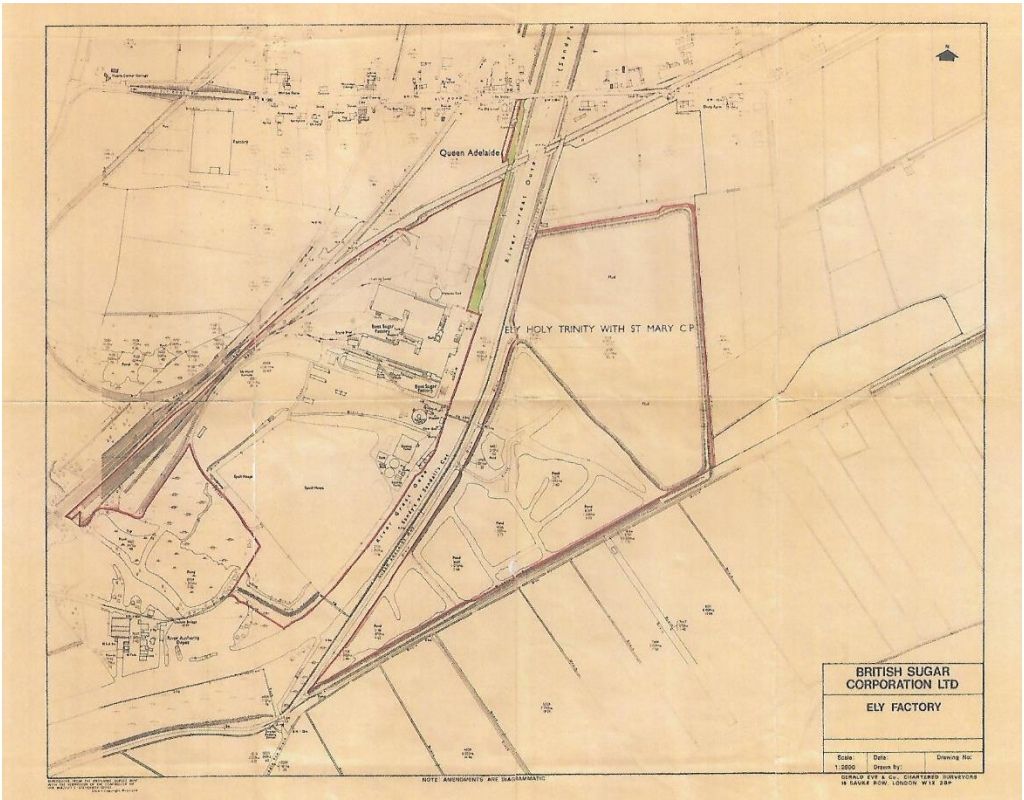
Potter Space Ely, serves the south-east of England with excellent road and rail links.

The company are the owners of the site of the former Ely Beet Sugar Factory. Some of the original buildings of the factory are part of the site today, as can be seen from the following images.






Potter Space Ely also provided this British Sugar Corporation, Limited, site plan below. (Date unknown).



The following aerial images are of the eighteen factories that were built, and also an extract from the publication, Report on the Sugar Beet Industry at Home and Abroad, published in 1931, with an aerial photograph of the Eynsham experimental factory, or research station.

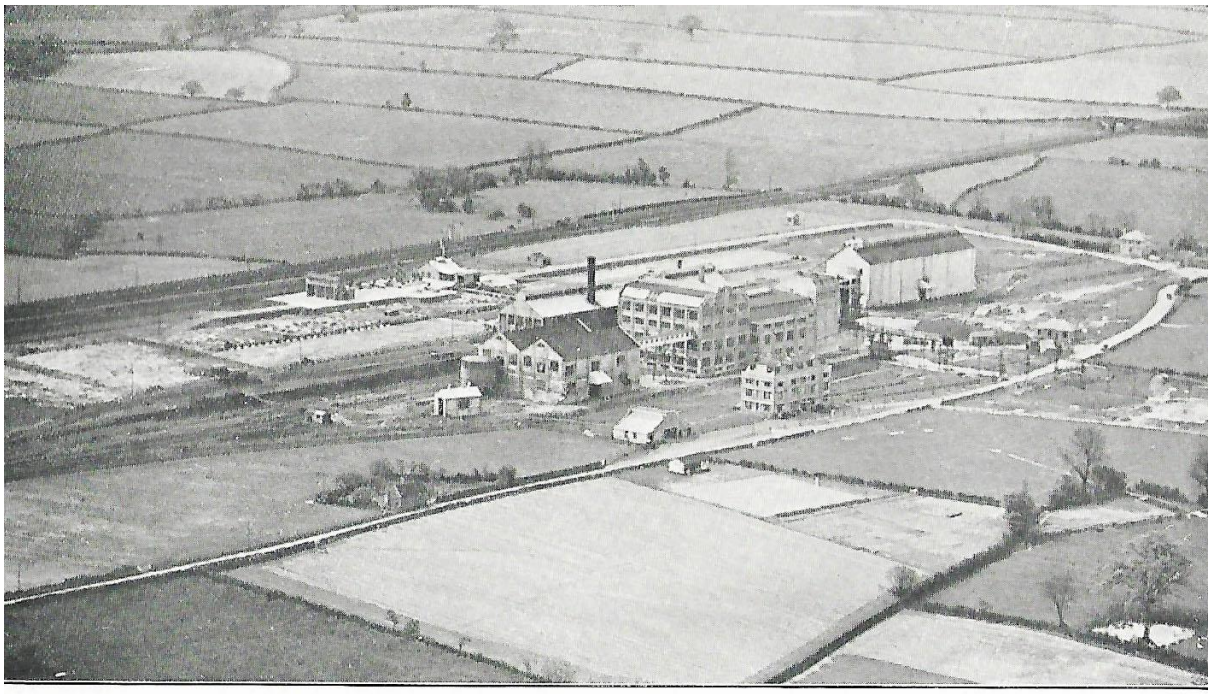


FIG. 2.—Aerial view of the Allscott Factory of the Shropshire Beet Sugar Company, Limited.

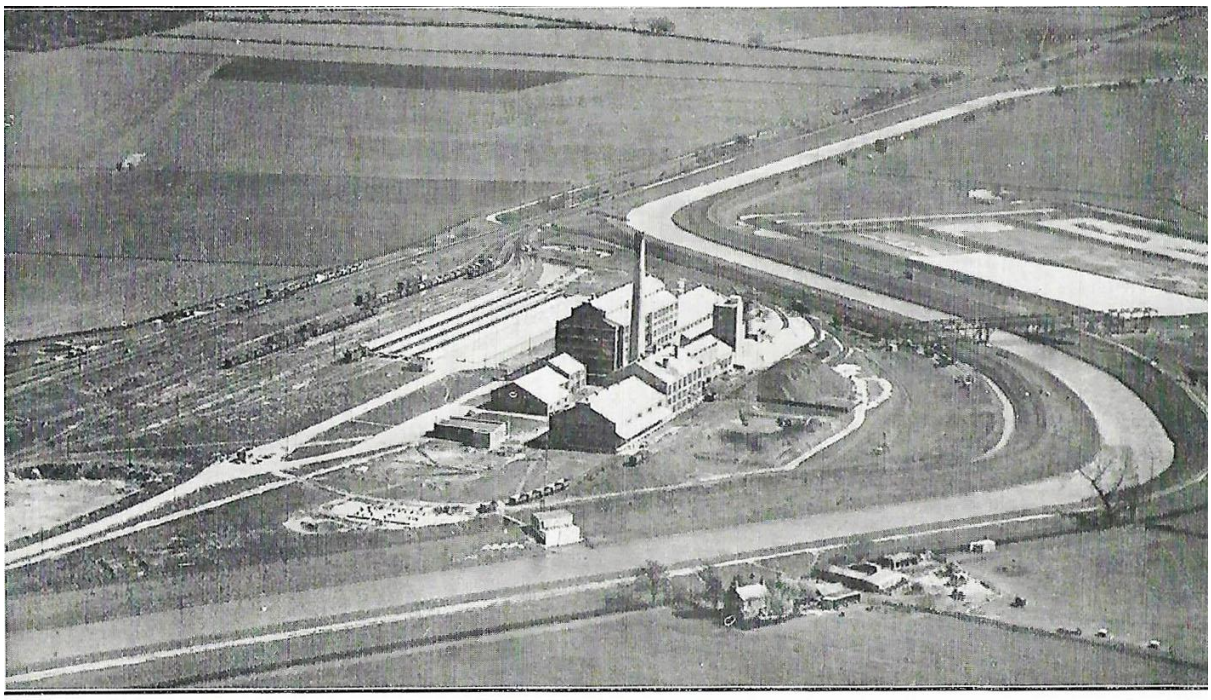


FIG. 3.—Aerial view of the Bardney Factory of the Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited.

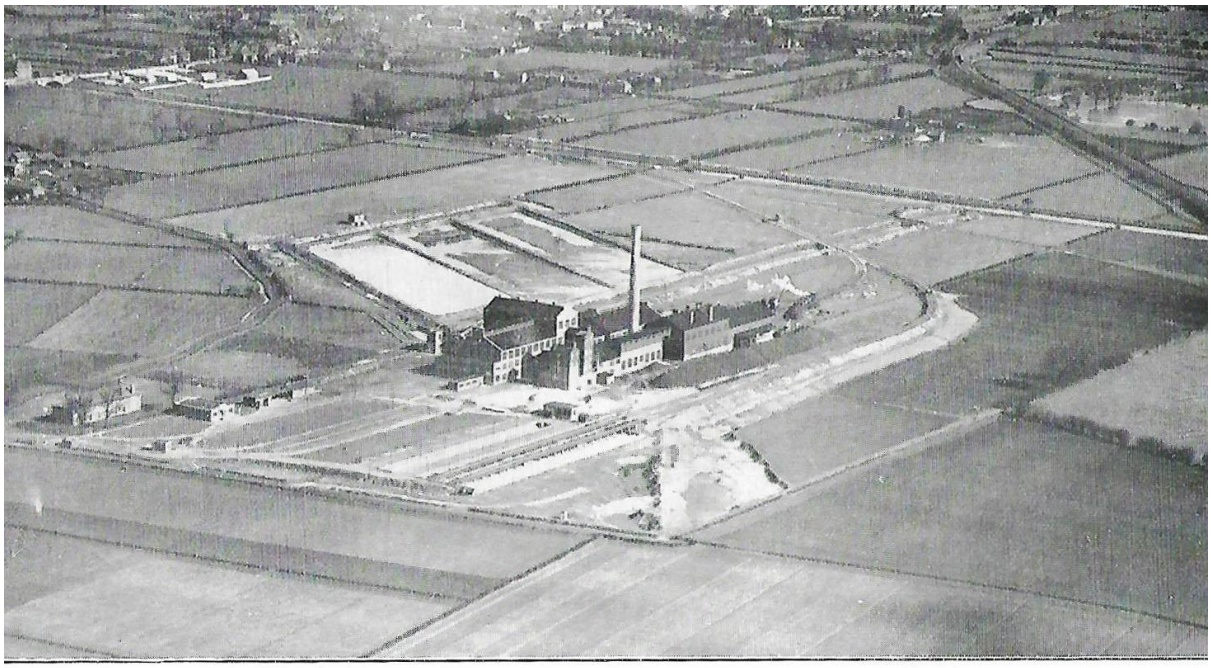


FIG. 6.—Aerial View of the Brigg Factory of Second Lincolnshire Sugar Company, Limited.

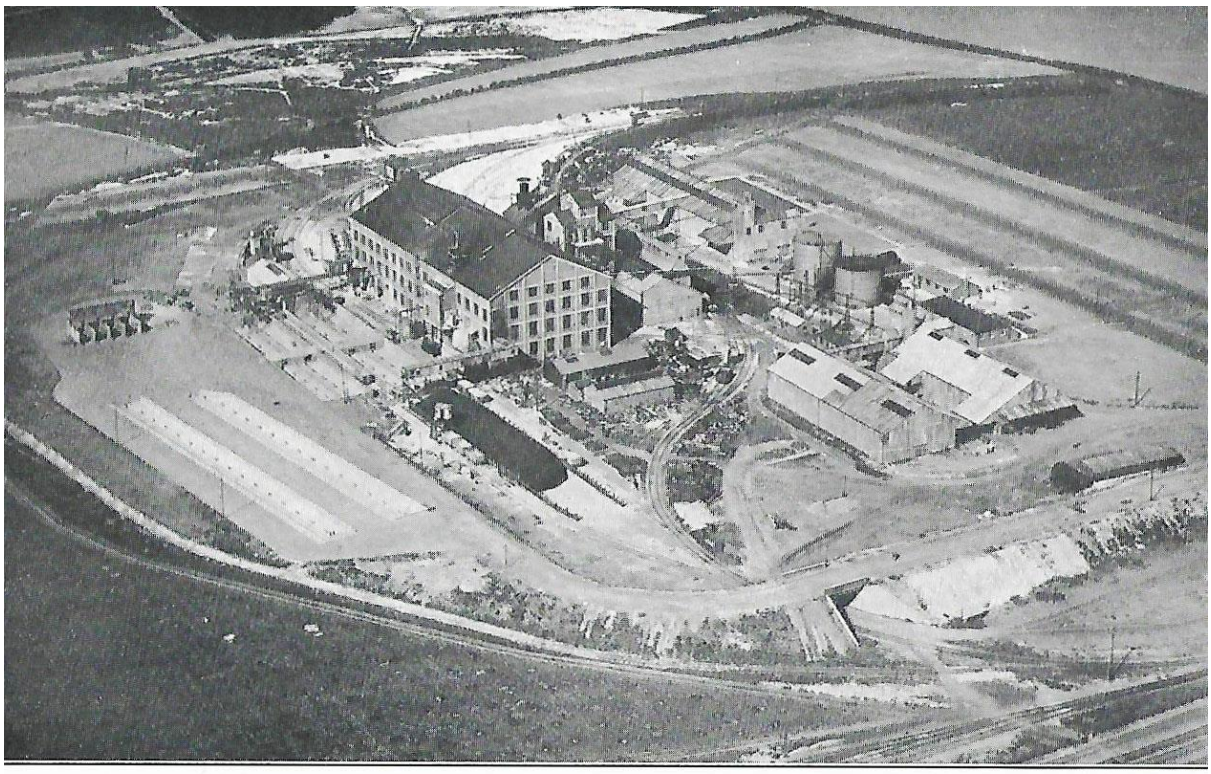


FIG. 7.—Aerial View of the Bury St. Edmunds Factory of United Sugar Company, Limited.

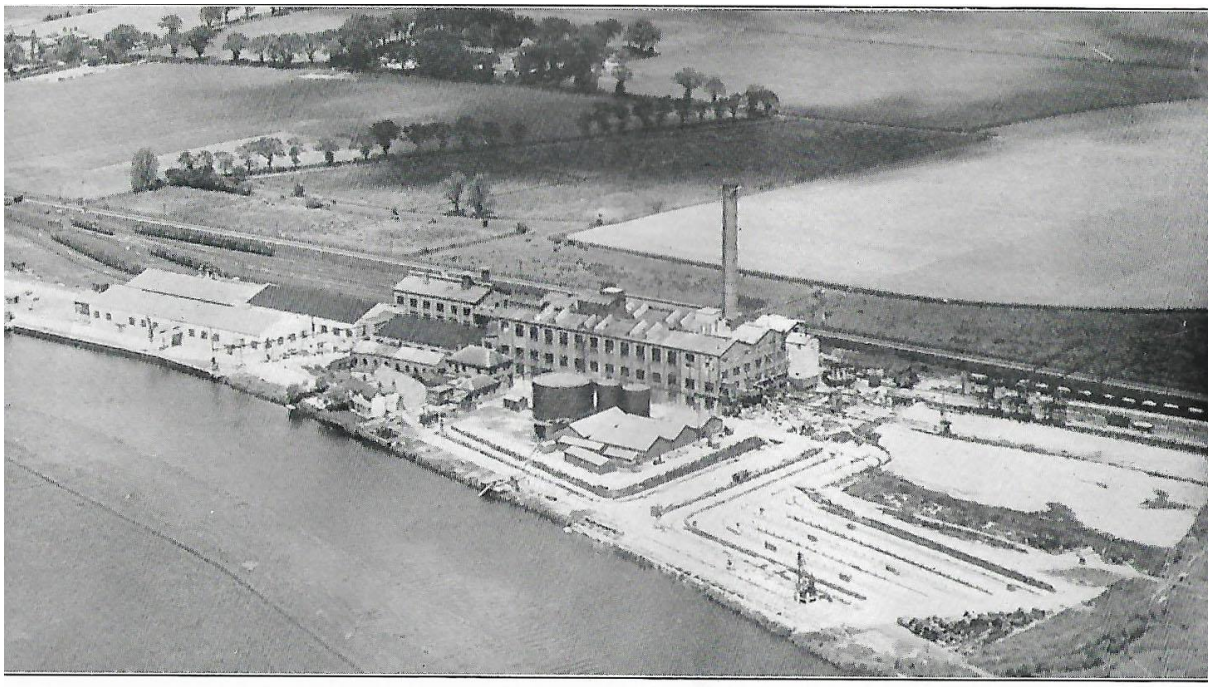


FIG. 8.—Aerial View of the Cantley Factory of The English Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

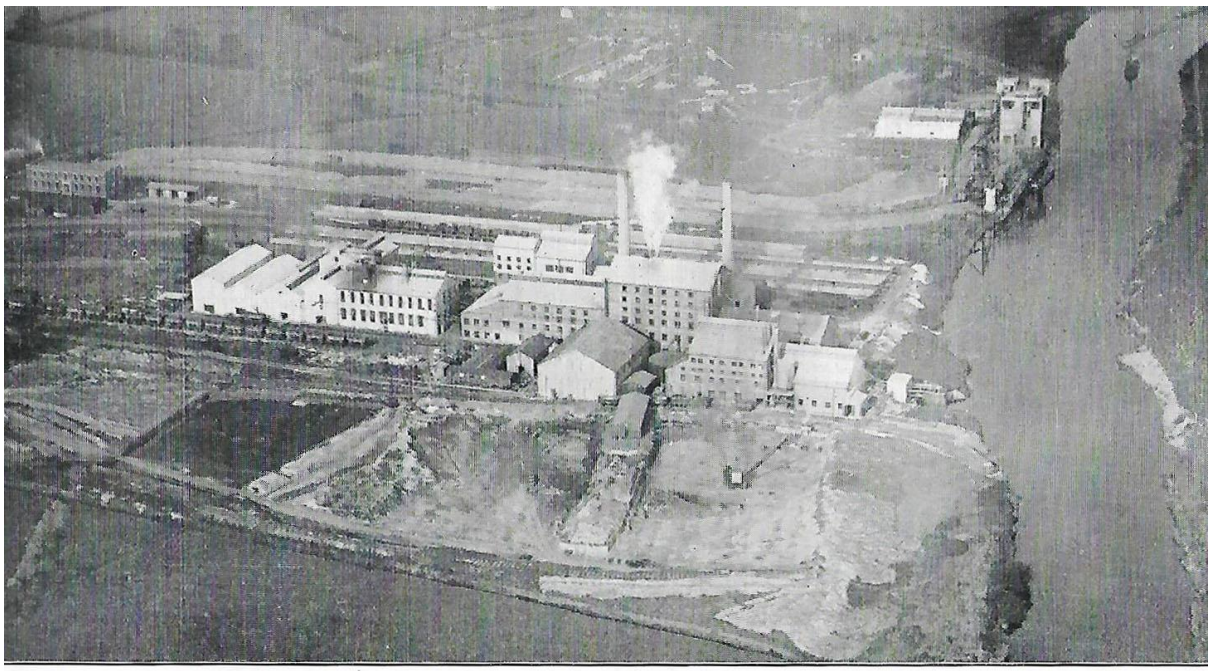


FIG. 9.—Aerial View of the Colwick Factory of The Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

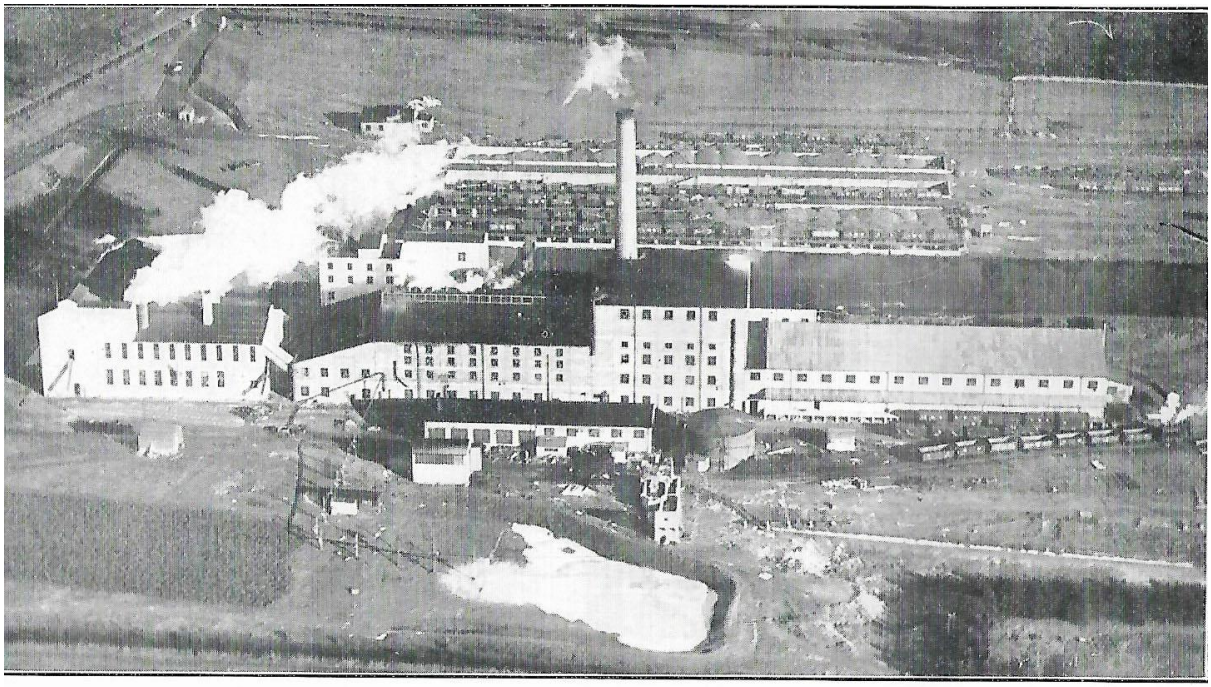


FIG. 10.—Aerial View of the Cupar Factory of Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

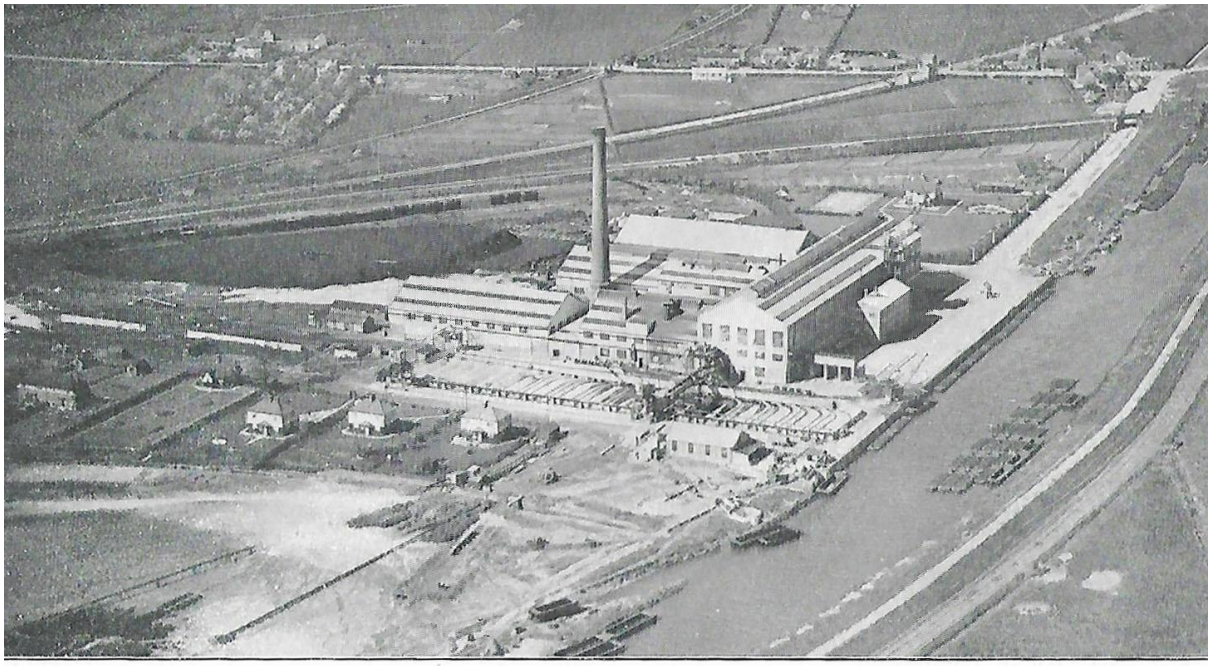


FIG. 23.—Aerial View of the Ely Factory of The Ely Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

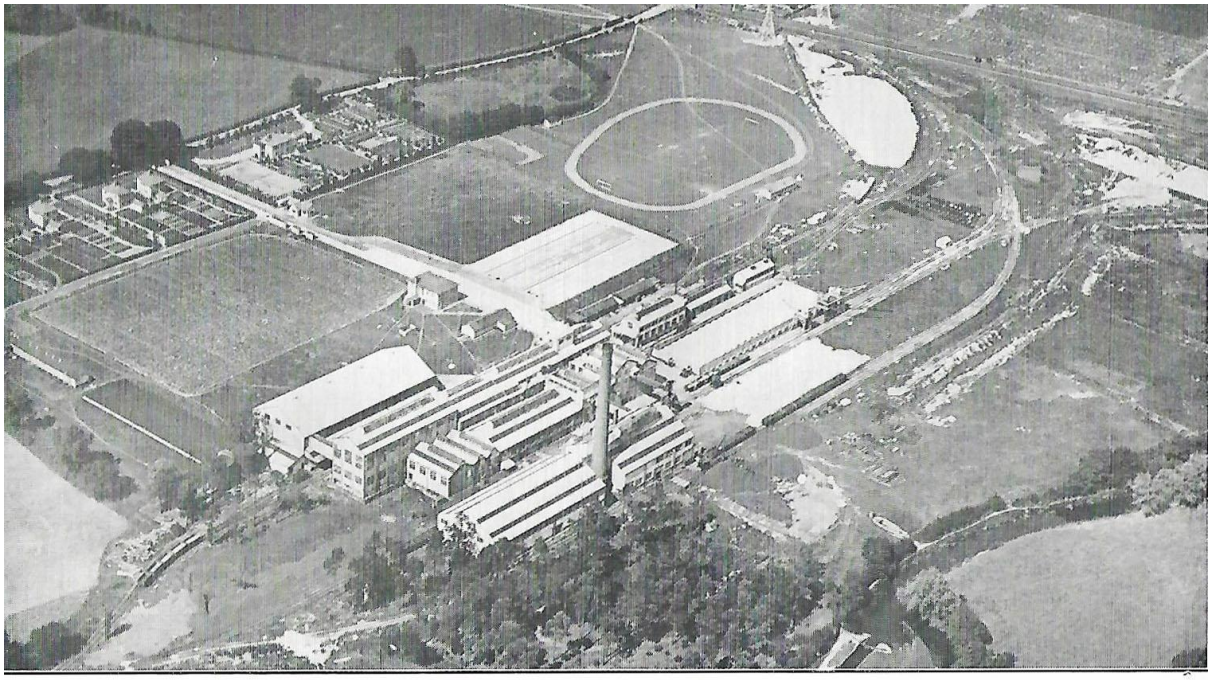


FIG. 40.—Aerial view of the Ipswich Factory of The Ipswich Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

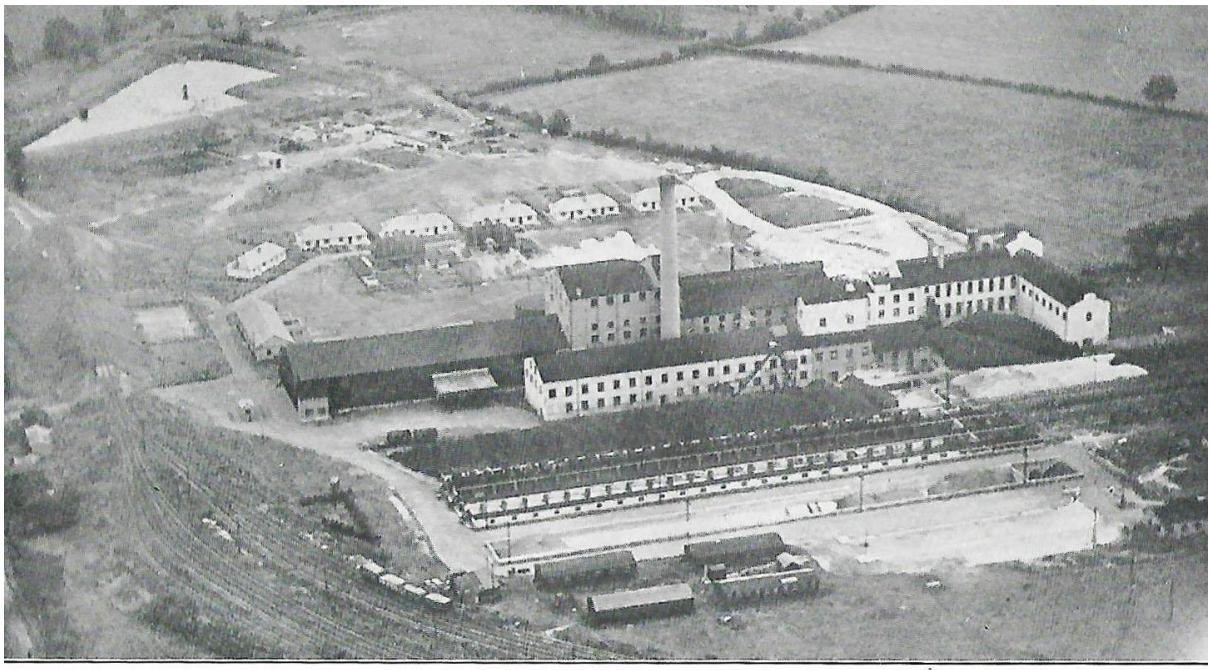


FIG. 33.—Aerial view of the Felstead Factory of Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

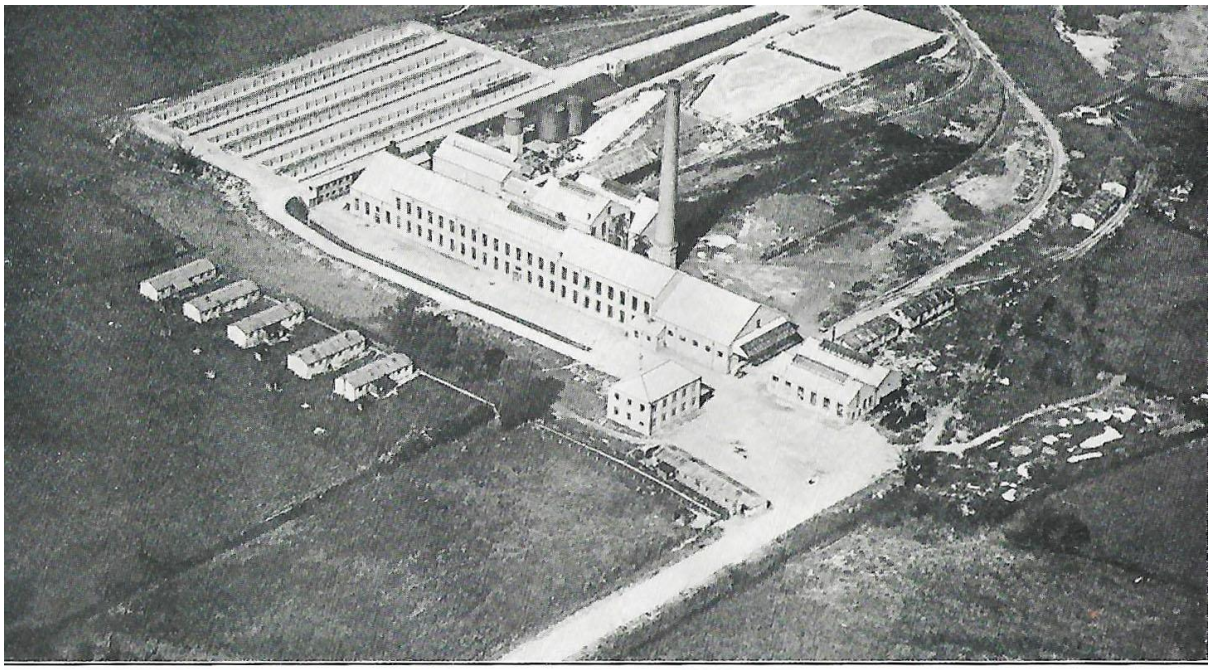


FIG. 57.—Aerial View of the Kelham Factory of Home Grown Sugar, Limited.

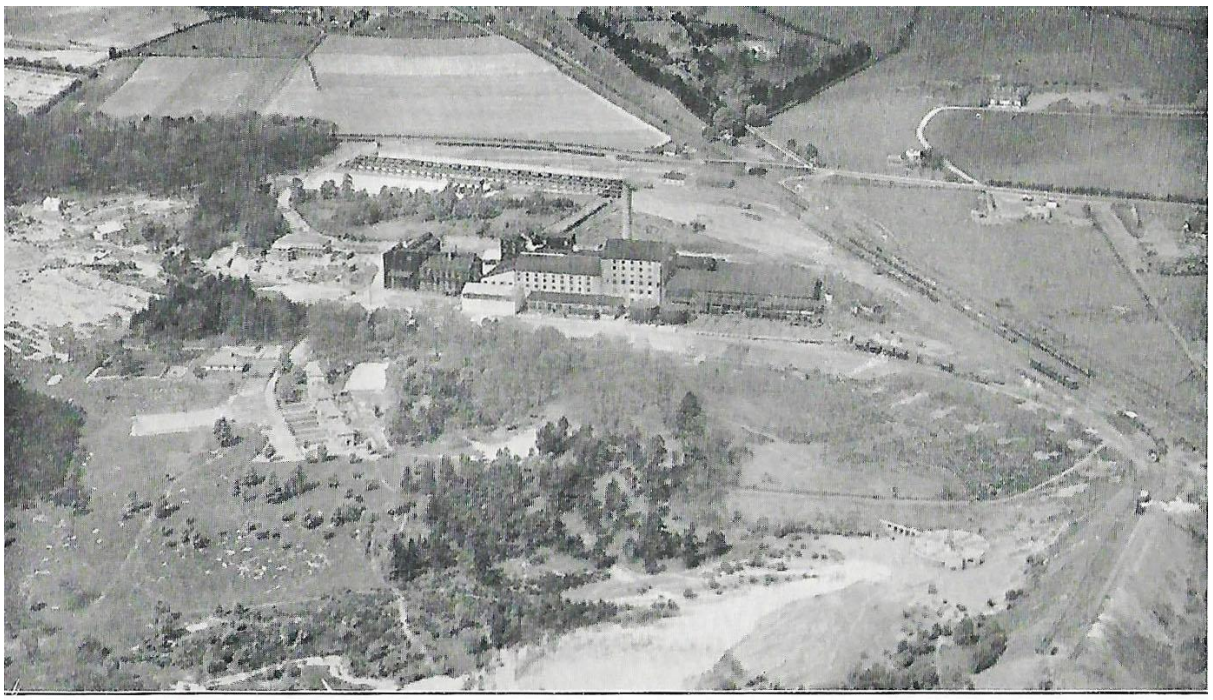


FIG. 58.—Aerial View of the Kidderminster Factory of The West Midland Sugar Company, Limited.

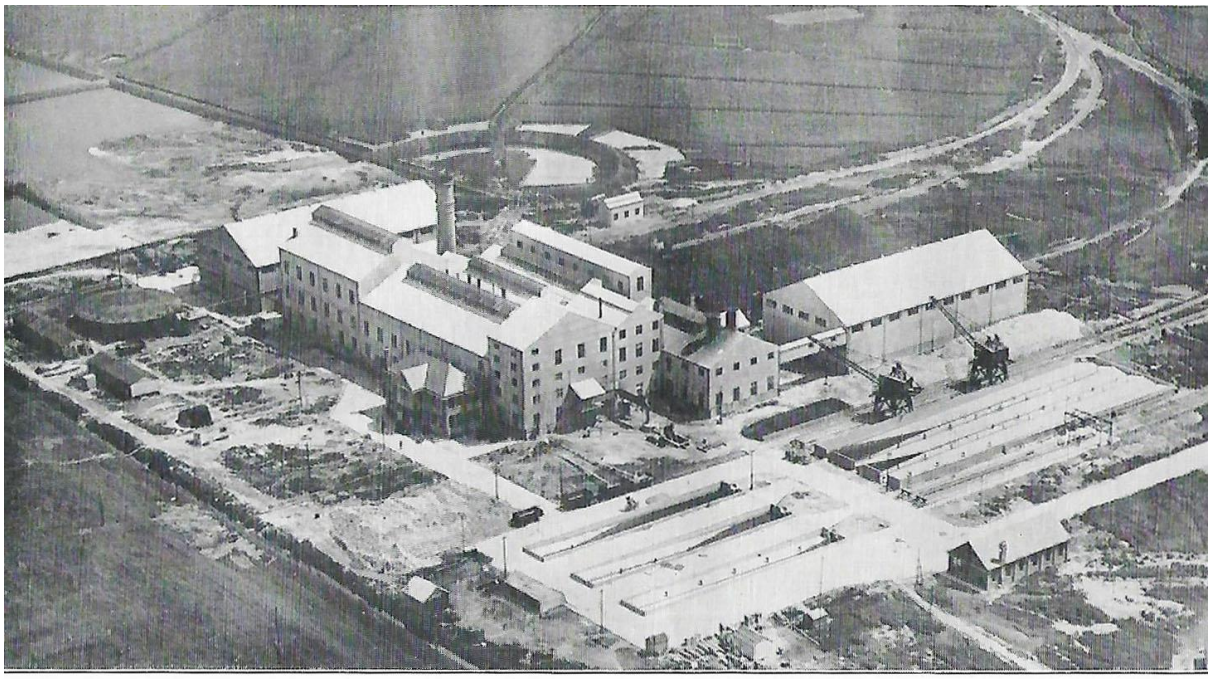


FIG. 59.—Aerial view of the King's Lynn Factory of The King's Lynn Beet Sugar Factory, Limited.

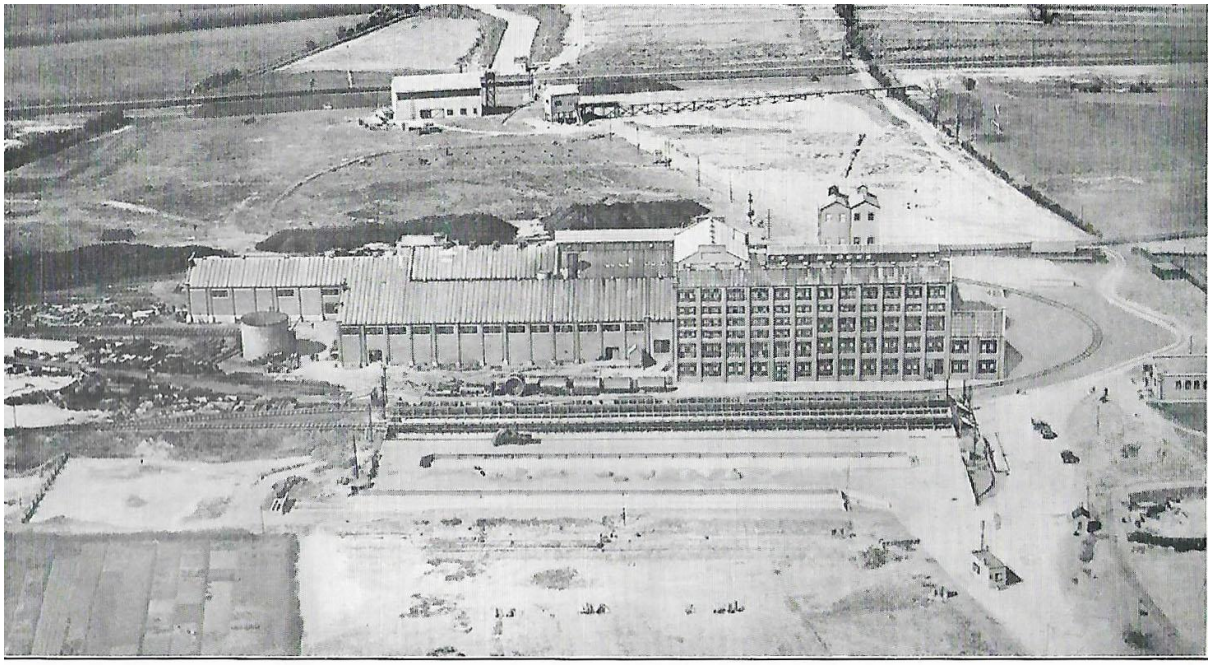


FIG. 62.—Aerial View of the Peterborough Factory of The Central Sugar Company, Limited.

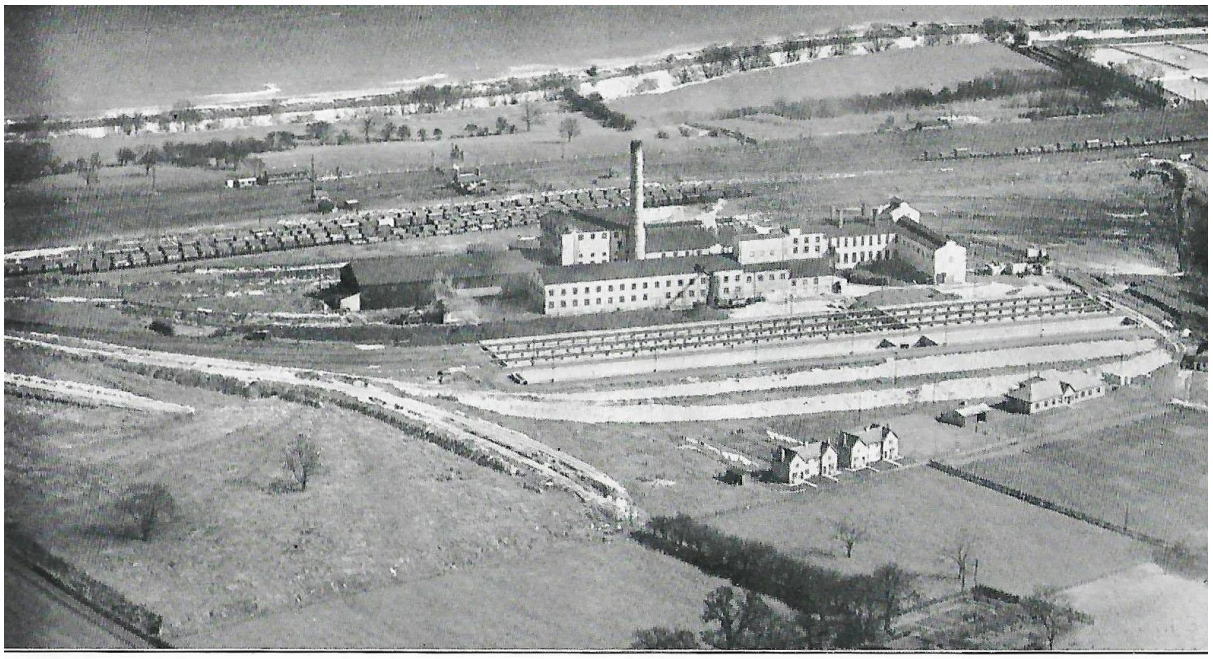


FIG. 66.—Aerial view of the Poppleton Factory of Second Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

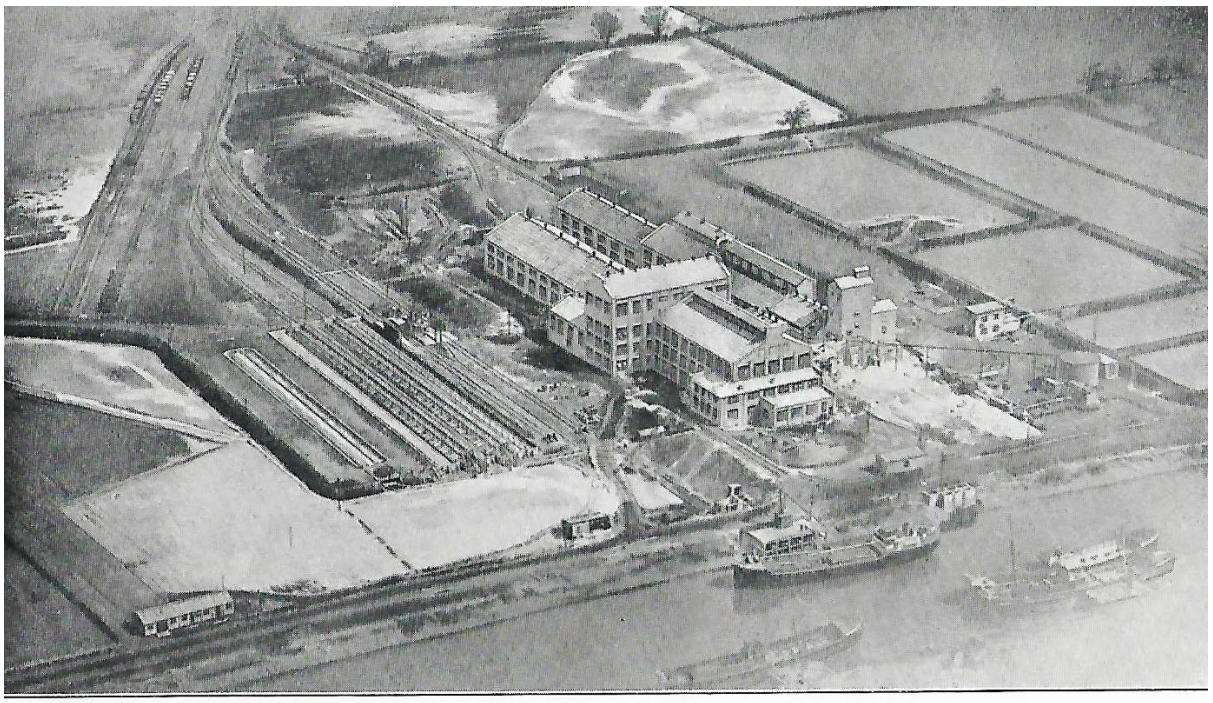


FIG. 67.—Aerial view of the Selby Factory of The Yorkshire Sugar Company, Limited.

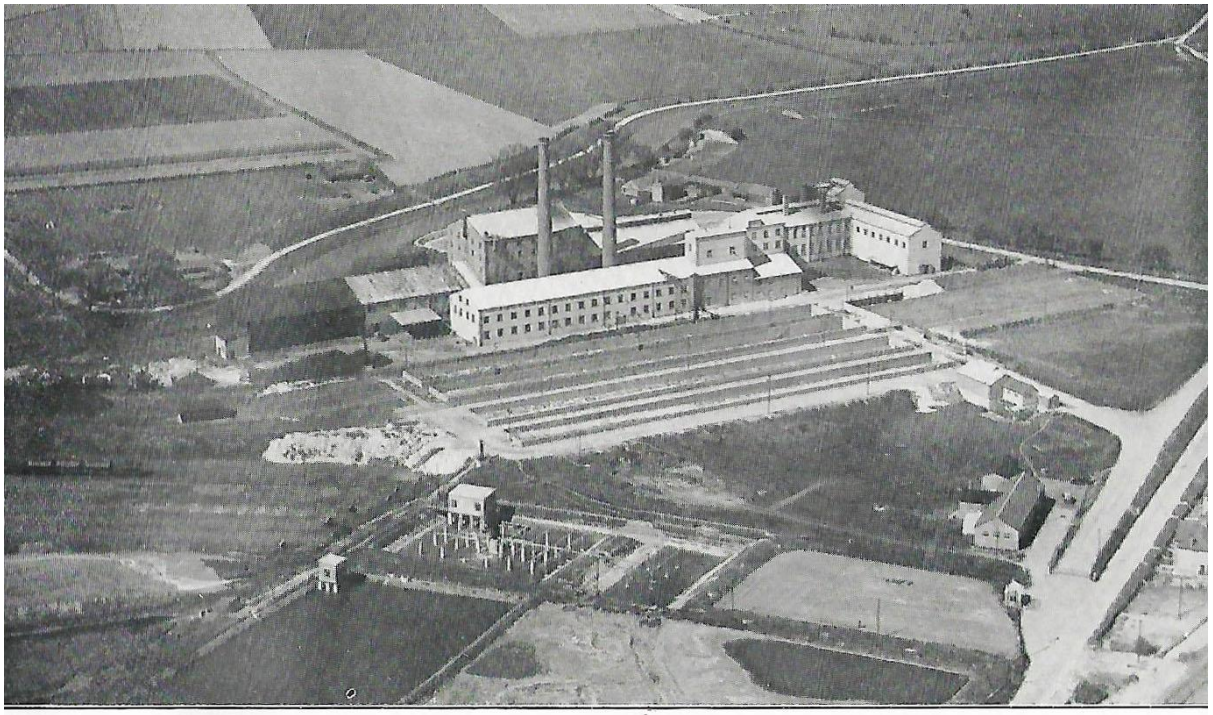


FIG. 68.—Aerial view of the Spalding Factory of The Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation, Limited.

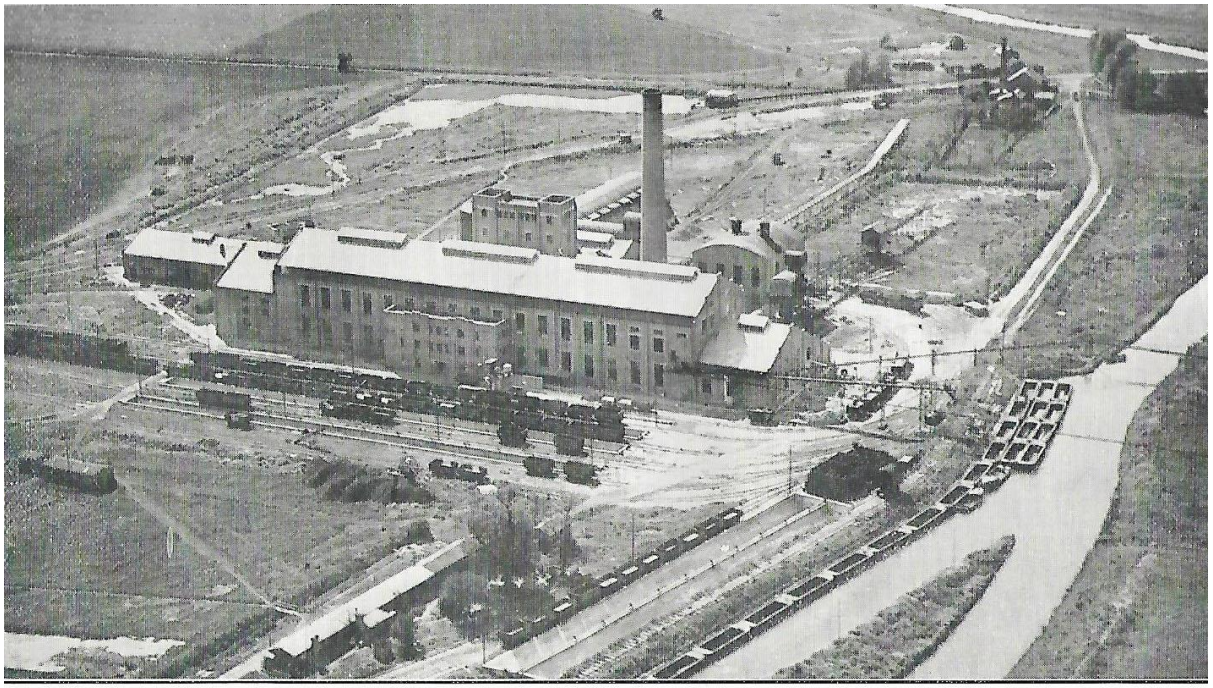


FIG. 69.—Aerial view of the Wissington Factory of British Sugar Manufacturers, Limited.

**Research in Sugar Manufacture.** So far, little research into the problems of sugar manufacture has been carried out in this country. The industry from the start adopted methods, the value of which had been proved abroad. Thus, all the factories are built on foreign lines. The factory management, nevertheless, constantly explore opportunities for improvements that may contribute to factory efficiency.

The only important experiments in the direction of evolving new processes have been those carried out at Eynsham by the Institute for Research in Agricultural Engineering at Oxford University, and later by Sugar Beet and Crop Driers, Limited., into the drying of sugar beets preparatory to sugar manufacture.

**Desiccation Process of Sugar Manufacture.** The principle adopted is the extraction of the sugar from the beets in their fresh state. In consequence, the manufacturing season is limited to the three or four months following the ripening of the crop. Ever since 1830, however, experiments have been made from time to time to ascertain whether the beets might be preserved by artificial drying, so as to enable the factory to extend its operations throughout the year. If this could be satisfactorily achieved, the same quantity of beets might be worked with a much smaller plant, thus saving capital outlay and reducing overhead charges through possibly involving additional expenditure on fuel and the storage of the intermediate product. Furthermore, small drying stations might be distributed throughout the growing areas with a view to saving transport charges, as the raw material could be transported to the sugar factory in a less bulky form. Fewer men would be necessary, but they would be employed permanently throughout the year.

A drying process of this kind, known as the “De Vecchis Process, is employed in Italy at two sugar factories. When, therefore, Parliament in 1924 decided to grant a subsidy to the industry in this country, a Commission of Enquiry was appointed by the Government to investigate the De Vecchis Process. Though the Commission in its Report considered that the process was imperfect and required modification, the principle of drying as an effective means of preservation seemed to it to be worthy of further investigation, and it recommended that research work be undertaken in England with a view to a rendering the process of sugar beet desiccation suitable for commercial application. Following this recommendation, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries made a grant in 1925 to the Institute for Research in Agricultural Engineering, (which had already carried out experiments in the artificial drying of farm crops,) for experimental work on these lines.

Preliminary laboratory work was followed by the erection of a small experimental factory or research station at Eynsham, near Oxford. The experimental work was continued until September 1926. In the progress report on these experiments, issued in 1926, it was stated that some of the assumptions on which the process was based could not be confirmed, but that a process had been developed and patented both for the drying of the beet and the extraction of sugar. The research station and the governing patents were purchased in 1926 by a private company, (Sugar Beet and Crop Dryers Limited), which proceeded to exploit the process commercially, enlarging, for the purpose, the factory at Eynsham to a capacity of 25,000 tons of fresh beets per annum.

Certain technical and financial difficulties have been encountered by the company operating this process, and there is divergence of opinion in technical circles, both in this country and abroad, as to the possibility of the future success of the process.

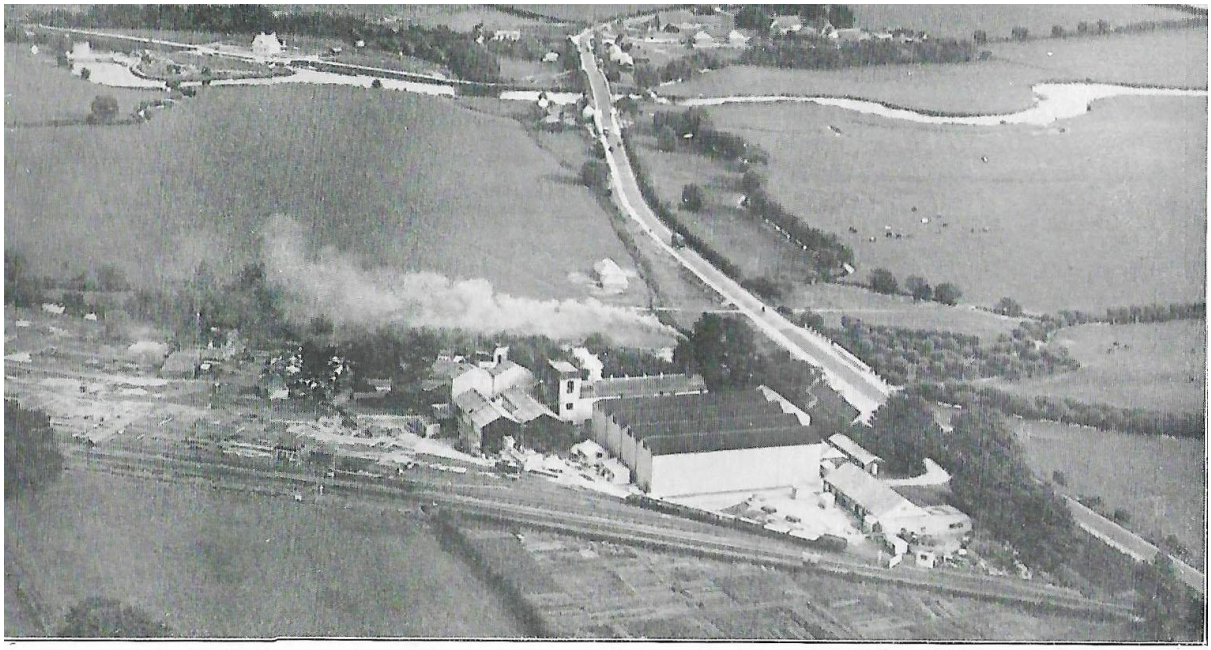


FIG. 24.—Aerial View of the Eynsham Factory (Desiccation Process) of Sugar Beet and Crop Driers, Limited.